





# ROMANTICS

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8pm C2 C3 C4 C5 C6 QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

MON 20	FAUST Goethe's masterpiece in the translation by Louis MacNeice A preview of the anniversary broadcast GARY BOND BBC RADIO DRAMA COMPANY
TUE 21	SIR WALTER SCOTT A blend of words and music about the greatest of all the early Romantic English prose writers SONGMAKERS' ALMANAC
WED 22	JOHN KEATS The poems and letters of the dying poet to Fanny Brawne One of the greatest of Romantic epistles BARBARA LEITCH HUNT & RICHARD PASCO
THU 23	HYENAS IN PETTICOATS She married Shelley, wrote Frankenstein, but she never met her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft SARAH MILES JOHN JUSTIN
FRI 24	BYRON: A PRIVATE VIEW The most celebrated and most notorious of all the British Romantics His verse and outrageous life ALAN BATES FREDERIC RAPHIAEL

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL 8.45pm C2 C3 C4 C5 C6

MON 20	SCHUMANN DUO RECITAL Davidson - Tanne Helm and Eichenlaub songs, Dichterlieder ERNEST HAEKELER (soprano) JEROME ROSE (piano)
TUE 21	CHILINGRIAN QUARTET Resonance Quartet no 3 in C, Beethoven Angebotello cello sonata & C major, Schubert ROBERT COHEN (cello) ROGER VIGNOLES (piano)
WED 22	SONG CYCLE Ode to Winter, Schubert ROBERT TEAR (soprano) with PHILIP LEDGER (piano)
THU 23	THE ROMANTIC GUITAR Marborough, Magic Flute, Romance Variations - Sor & Paganini Songs - Schubert, Weber, Sor, Beethoven CARLOS BONNIE (guitar) JENNIFER SMITH (soprano)
FRI 24	ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Conduct PINCHAS STEINBERG Symphony no 3 in D major, Schubert Concerto in 10 major, Paganini & Anna Schumann AARON ROSAND (violin) JEROME ROSE (piano)

2pm EXPLORATIONS £2.00	4.15pm FINE ART £2.00
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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

JULY 10 1981

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## Victim of the Fourth Republic

By Douglas Johnson

JEAN LACOUTURE:  
Pierre Mendès France  
547pp. Paris: Seuil.

The French are strong on protocol. The more republican the régime the more ceremonial its etiquette. When, on May 21 last, François Mitterrand was officially proclaimed fourth President of the Fifth Republic, the Salle des Fêtes of the Elysée Palace was crowded with the representatives of the various corps and institutions of that Republic. But as the distant guns boomed out their salute, Mitterrand's smilingly greeted one man who did not present anything of anybody, but who was there simply in his own right. To Pierre Mendès France the new President said that it was thanks to him that he was there, that his presence in the Elysée was "la justification de tant d'années dont vous avez été l'initiateur". With great ceremony he gave him the accolade.

When one says that Mendès France (the name, Jean Lacouture establishes, must not be hyphenated) was not representing any group or institution, that is true enough. But he represented something more, something uniquely personal. It is not merely that he has always been regarded as a man of unusual ability, in his time the youngest baronier and the youngest deputy in France, and then the youngest to hold a ministerial post, an expert on economic affairs at a time when French political culture was notably ignorant in this domain, a redoubtable and forceful political figure who has had to be taken seriously by all parties. Nor is it simply a matter of his honesty and sincerity, of his position as a statesman who has never sought the easy way out, who has always taken a stand on matters of principle and has readily assumed those responsibilities both of office and of resignation. The reputation of Mendès France is the equivalent of a legend, but a legend shot through with a nostalgia of the "journées arrivées", of what might have been.

It is as if many Frenchmen are ashamed of their country's recent past. Is this because Gaullism and post-Gaullism were a defeat for liberalism, because they stand for a narrow and antiquated nationalism, for a blatant inequality in social conditions and opportunities, and a complacent and distasteful preoccupation with material achievement? Whatever the reason, there is still a long-standing guilt over the disappointments of the Liberation, the failures of the Fourth Republic, the degradation of colonial wars and the inadequacies of France in the contemporary world. There is a lack of correlation between the ambitions and assumptions acknowledged by a great variety of French people and their recognized achievements. There is a tendency to look back regretfully: if only Mendès had been in power, if only post-war France had turned to Mendès, if only the Fourth Republic had availed itself of the talented and clear-sighted leader whom it chose to neglect and to reject.

This legend of the "journées arrivées" (not dissimilar to the legends in other countries surrounding such figures as Adlai Stevenson or Hugh Gaitskell) was, like all the best myths, founded on a basis of reality. At 3 o'clock on the afternoon of June 17, 1954, Pierre Mendès France went to the tribune of the Assemblée Nationale in Paris. He was then aged forty-seven and had been a deputy since 1932. He had served as a junior Treasury minister in Léon Blum's government just before the war, he had joined General de Gaulle in London and had been his minister both in Algiers and in the France of the Liberation; he was president of the Assembly Commission of Finance but he had not held any governmental office for nine years. His speech, in which he sought to be invested with the powers of forming a government, was sensational. Although the Chamber of Deputies was the natural centre for cynicism, and although the great French game of politics was played above all by the

blases, the cautious and the self-seeking, Mendès France sent a thrill of amazement and enthusiasm throughout the political world. Within four weeks, he promised, he would bring the French war in Indo-China to an end. If not, he would resign as Prime Minister.

This war had been dragging on for a long time. It had reached an apparent climax six weeks earlier with the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, but the beleaguered French army was living in apprehension of an even bloodier outcome. Thus Mendès France, with his defiant waver of bringing about a peace, offered a dramatic way out of the deadlock. And this was not all. As in an earlier and unsuccessful attempt to form a government, in 1953, he drew attention to the economic backwardness of the country, to the confusion which surrounded its place in Europe, and to the uncertainties which necessarily dogged a nation that had lost its sense of reality. It was his intention, he claimed, to

But of course it could not last. The man who had made peace was the man who had accepted defeat. Decolonization could be described as the betrayal of the French empire. The abandonment of an impossible treaty was said to be the destruction of a noble ideal, of a united and prosperous Europe, freed from the threats of war, communism, nationalism or economic crisis. The attempt to reform the economy was seen as a sign of *étatisme*, interference, technocratic intervention in fundamental liberties. The whole Mendès France episode was depicted as a scandalous aberration, an extraordinary intermezzo during which the affairs of France had been entrusted to an adventurer, an outsider, someone who was not properly French, a Jew, a sensation-seeker, a self-styled superman. And soon a coalition of communists, Europeanists and nationalists, joining up with the lobbyists organized by alcohol distillers, bankers and Algerian settlers who believed that the government was threatening their in-

commentator on both history and politics, increasing ill-health has limited his rôle as a practising politician. While other Prime Ministers have been relegated to the sidelines like founding dethroned, an intruder and an upstart, was considered to be intolerable and the most sinister projects were attributed to the French Prime Minister, who was wittily given the nickname of "Mendès-Kerensky". "I've been told some very dirty things about you", said John Foster Dulles to Mendès France one evening in the summer of 1954: "I hope you haven't paid too much for them", was the reply.

Almost certainly the treaty would never have got through the Assembly. Joseph Laniel, Mendès France's predecessor as Prime Minister, had advised him not to put it unchanged before Parliament. But once his attempts to modify the treaty had failed (and those French Europeanists who put treaty before country, and who weakened the negotiating position of their Prime Minister by intriguing against him in Brussels, must take some responsibility for that failure) then Mendès France did the only possible thing and allowed the Assembly to decide. It is difficult to believe that its rejection there set France back by four years, as Monnet claimed. It is easier to imagine, and Lacouture quotes a former supporter of the treaty as saying just this, how the Gaullists and the Communists would have paraded in front of every war memorial in the country, and raised the cry of treason as the French army disappeared into the Community Defence force. However, if treason was mentioned, the opponents had another card up their sleeve. Within the government of "Monsieur Mendès-curieux-arrivé-sur-nom-mendès", there was a definite traitor - the Minister of the Interior, François Mitterrand.



Pierre Mendès France (1971: photographed by Leon Herschrittl).

bring about reforms in all areas. Going beyond political prejudices and calculations this was a time for national unity and for patriotic endeavour: but above all, it was a call for action; and it was to Mendès France's demonstration of vigour and determination that the deputies, and the country, responded.

Within four weeks peace was made in Indo-China and for the French, at least, that war was over. Within a remarkably short period of time an agreement was signed whereby the French protectorates over Tunisia and Morocco were given to them in favourable conditions. Soon the Algerian war started and with it the belief that, if given the opportunity, Mendès France, *le bradeur*, would once again abandon French interests, and betray both the army and the settlers. Then came the Fifth Republic, and defeat and isolation for those who refused to accept a régime which they saw as the product of an illegal military coup. Although in the elections of 1957 Mendès France made a much heralded return to politics, but above all by the impression of dynamism which his activities created, succeeded in suggesting that a new era had dawned. From the depths of his Colombey retreat, a sombre de Gaulle admitted to a certain admiration: as aged Churchill commented: "that not since the days of Clemenceau had he known such a sure hand on the helm of French affairs; the Parliamentarians complained that politicians were no longer a fit subject for their mockery and satire.

terests, brought the government to an end. After 245 days of power, Mendès France had fallen, like any other politician. His fellow radical and long-standing associate, the ever-present and ever-adaptable Edgar Faure, replaced him. The Fourth Republic was itself again.

Surely, it was thought, Mendès France would return. He was not yet fifty; he had made an unforgettable impression; neither the existing political organizations nor their personnel would allow a *second tour de France*. But no opportunity was given to him to appeal to the country in favourable conditions. Soon the Algerian war started and with it the belief that, if given the opportunity, Mendès France, *le bradeur*, would once again abandon French interests, and betray both the army and the settlers. Then came the Fifth Republic, and defeat and isolation for those who refused to accept a régime which they saw as the product of an illegal military coup. Although in the elections of 1957 Mendès France made a much heralded return to politics, but above all by the impression of dynamism which his activities created, succeeded in suggesting that a new era had dawned. From the depths of his Colombey retreat, a sombre de Gaulle admitted to a certain admiration: as aged Churchill commented: "that not since the days of Clemenceau had he known such a sure hand on the helm of French affairs; the Parliamentarians complained that politicians were no longer a fit subject for their mockery and satire.

Of course, not everyone shared or shared this admiration. The first, and often the most violent, of his critics and enemies, who applied the most debatable means of opposing and discrediting him, were the high-minded idealists of the European movement. It was assumed that because Mendès France was not an enthusiastic supporter of the treaty setting up a European Defence Community, then he was its opponent; and also that he could only have been an opponent for base and personal motives: namely, that the treaty had originally been devised by René Pleven, a politician with whom he had had differences in the past. He was supposedly jealous, therefore, of what had once been called the Pleven Plan. Jean Monnet did not have a high opinion of Mendès France's abilities, and his chief preoccupation at that time was to keep the Americans convinced of Europe's ability to resist Soviet Russia. The American diplomat David Bruce had an almost fanatical devotion to the treaty and was determined to push it. As Lacouture explains, while

One problem which the career and personality of Mendès France poses is whether, in fact, he was a good politician. Those who are critical of him note to what extent he has often chosen a lonely position, and have suggested that he fixed such a position because it gave him a certain sense of his own superiority. Like the shy man who backs into the limelight, Mendès France, according to this interpretation, is the modest man who knows that he is all alone in being right. This is probably unfair, but there may be some significance in the fact that Mendès France was always successful in the Radical party, which was a loose and personal organization, until he required a larger and more national organization within which he could hope to become a dominant political force in the country. Then he was unable to find satisfaction with the Radicals, and he was equally ill at ease amongst the independent socialists and socialists. He had the ability to offend people unnecessarily. After being defeated in the Assembly, he made a defiant speech which gained him no



thing but helped to convince many that he was seeking personal power and was contemptuous of Assembly procedure.

On two occasions at least he offended Mitterrand unnecessarily. The first was when Mitterrand was accused of being the source of several leaks over the war in Indo-China, leaks which had supposedly found their way both to the Viet-Minh and in the French Communist Party. Mendes France, in this complicated imbroglio of double agents, omitted to keep Mitterrand fully informed of the state of his investigations, and since Mitterrand, as Minister of the Interior, had the right to know about questions of national security, this was a double mistake: the minister concerned was being held at arm's length and the minister suspected did not seem to have the confidence of the Prime Minister. The other occasion was during the heady events of 1968, when Mitterrand and Mendes France were working together in order to fill the vacuum of power which the apparent disintegration of the government had created. Mitterrand, who had been the candidate of the left in the 1965 Presidential elections, assumed that he was the leader. But the two men failed to agree on many points, and an unpremeditated walk by Mendes France around the Latin Quarter, and a silent but well-publicized attendance at a large student meeting, convinced Mitterrand that Mendes France was trying to outdistance him and to win popular acclaim by showing himself in the streets. At all events, Mendes France was not able to turn the crisis of 1968 to his advantage as General de Gaulle had exploited the crisis of 1958.

Those who were present in the Salle du Vieux Manège at Grenoble in 1967, when Mendes France launched his electoral campaign, will recall how a large and enthusiastic audience listened to a weighty tribute from Professor Jacques Monod (one of the four Nobel prizewinners who had announced their "Mendésisme"), to a

brilliant and biting analysis of the political situation in France. From Maurice Duverger, and to an excited speech from a local politician ("notre chance, c'est Mendés France"). The speech given by Mendes France himself was quite different. It was a cold and careful lecture on economics, and an analysis of the way in which Gaullist policies, or absence of policy, was allowing France to fall behind other countries in economic and social achievement. In some ways such a speech was to be expected. Mendes France was not a politician. As he said, he was not opening a campaign which would be marked by the distribution of key-rings and aprons. But this speech was comparable, in the view of at least one British observer, to Harold Wilson's Scarborough speech. It was a denunciation of misrule and of economic decline and it was also a bid for power.

But was a Scarborough speech appropriate to France in 1967? Here we are at the root of the paradox of Mendes France. His reputation is based largely on the illegitimacy which he understood more clearly than others what was happening in France, and spoke with the ingenuity and honesty born of this understanding. In 1944 and 1945 he saw that France was heading towards an unhealthy inflation, and because General de Gaulle refused to adopt the austere measures necessary to prevent this, he resigned. In the 1950s he understood the need for decolonization and acted accordingly. He was correct although it never made him popular to be correct. But was he right in his assessment of French prosperity before France was affected by the current recession? Was he right in his assessment of how the European Economic Community would affect the French economy? Was he right in his uncompromising rejection of the constitution of the Fifth Republic? When, in a famous public debate, Georges Pompidou condemned his wholesale attachment to the Fourth Republic, as a skilled debater he

compared Pompidou to the partisans of the Second Empire, but Pompidou's accusation remains. The most distinguished victim of the impossible Fourth Republic was its most persistent defender.

Other paradoxes abound. In 1958 this courageous political fighter was defeated in Normandy and lost his position as deputy for the town of Louviers, which he had held for more than twenty-five years; he immediately resigned as mayor of Louviers and was elected to the National Assembly. He refused to fight Louviers again, even when invited, but those who, more difficult, constituency in Normandy, and accepted to be *parachuté* to Grenoble. Mitterrand, in a similar position, fought back tenaciously in his department, and reconquered it, commune by commune. Mendes France's association with the revolutionaries of 1968 was also curious. How could the man who believed in the primacy of economic reality become the hero of those who believed that "tout est possible"? How could someone who had been so profoundly affected by his association with General de Gaulle become his most determined opponent?

Perhaps "Mendésisme", like Gaullism, is an attitude rather than a doctrine. It permits contradictions, it includes uncertainties, it encourages change. Like Gaullism, "Mendésisme" is often presented as if it were a doctrine. But whereas Gaullism was always presented boldly, with the confidence of one who knew that everyone has been, is, or will be, Gaullist, "Mendésisme" has necessarily been presented tentatively, with all the uncertainties of the economics expert in the contemporary world. De Gaulle may or may not have said "l'intendance ault"; he could well have said "l'économie ault". To the outsider de Gaulle, things happened, and he responded. As for the outsider Mendes France, things passed him by. There are many, not only in France, who share his regret that this was so.

## Vanishing intellectuals

By Patrick McCarthy

REGIS DEBRAY:

Teachers, Writers, Celebrities

Translated by David Macey

251pp. New Left Books. £11.

0 86091 039 3

Regis Debray and his English professor, Francis Mulhern, make extraordinary claims for *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities*. Its object, writes Mulhern, is to "discover the structured tendencies of intellectual behaviour in successive cultural production-systems and to show how these dictate the posture of the intelligentsia in given political situations." Debray insists that he is cultivating a precise science and that "one day it may be possible to study 'opportunism' mathematically". In the meantime he sprinkles his book with the jargon of biology but his comparisons between writers and insects are amusing rather than illuminating.

If Debray were making an exhaustive analysis of the relationship between French intellectuals and their society, he could surely not have limited himself to teachers and writers. But although the French title of this book was *Le Pouvoir intellectuel en France*, it does not discuss scientists or experts in economics, business and government. This is an important omission because the outstanding change among French intellectuals, which has been spurred by changes in the education system, is the rise of practical thinkers like engineers and managers. Novelists and philosophers are no longer the masters of advanced thought, and the economic articles of *Le Monde* or *L'Express* are more important than the editorials. This in turn reflects the way that France has been transformed by the industrialization and relative stability of the Fifth Republic.

Debray's analysis of the history of twentieth-century French intellectuals is simplistic: from 1900 to 1930 the archetypal intellectual was the teacher who campaigned for Dreyfus and supported the Third Republic; from 1930 to 1960 it was the *NRG*-Gaullist writer; from 1960 on it has been the television celebrity. Debray has not done much reading on the earlier periods. One is delighted, however, that he draws on Albert Thibaudet's *La République des professeurs*. Thibaudet, who had an excellent critical imagination, is almost ignored by young French critics and Debray has done well to resurrect him.

Like most pamphleteers he is pessimistic, but the real reason for his pessimism is hidden behind his hatred of television. Debray does not really mean that post-1960 France has no good philosophers or novelists; it is the depravity of the communist and the mass media that bothers him. It is right to depict this demise and, if he were more Marxist than he is, he might explain it better. The death of left-wing writers like Sartre goes together with the rise of managers and economists. After 1960 it became impossible to believe that the working classes would liberate themselves, liberate and transform humanity. Sartre's long battle to link existential freedom with freedom from social exploitation was continued by only a few disciples: Derrida and Lacan may offer the seeds of a political philosophy, but they are not explicitly political, as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were. The difference has nothing to do with the mass media since the work of Derrida and Lacan is hardly suited to television. The explanations lie in the historical situation in which French intellectuals now find themselves.

Debray laments rather than analyses this but he has written a lively book. He is lucky too in his translator. *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities* must have been a difficult work to translate but David Macey has done so excellent job.

Republic and that its defence of independent aesthetic values was the struggle of a pre-1914 generation - Gide - against more politicized younger writers like Malraux or Drieu La Rochelle.

Teachers and writers do indeed reflect and shape their society. But they cannot be explained by a manichean division into "bourgeois" and "Independent" intellectuals. Debray's aim, however, is to depict a lost golden age with which to contrast the decadence of present-day France. There are, he tells us, no more journalists (*Le Monde*?), the universities are in decline, the political parties are weak (the Socialist Party?) and "France has probably entered one of the most reactionary periods in its history" (Mitterrand's election?). Since which Debray himself has been appointed as one of the new President's advisers. Instant books, television and the other tentacles of the mass media have supposedly destroyed intellectual thought and creativity. Should we conclude that Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Barthes, Derrida, Deleuze, Claude Simon and Nathalie Sarraute, who have all been influential since 1960, have somehow never existed?

As well as exaggerating his case, Debray is confusing three different phenomena: the "cultural" system, the mass media and bourgeois culture. The system whereby authors praise their rivals in order to be praised in their turn is not new; the *NRG* writers did it even as they complained about it. The mass media may indeed create instant celebrities but in a society like France, where social and cultural disparities are so great, the high intelligentsia is well able to find alternative forms of communication. The argument that the mass media are the vehicle that enables the bourgeoisie to impose its culture is valid only if one accepts Debray's definition of what constitutes bourgeois culture.

Yet if one refuses to be misled by Debray one may perceive real merits in his book. Most of it is taken up by a diatribe about the vanity and jealousy of Parisian intellectuals. Debray is less of an analyst than a pamphleteer, and sarcasm and rhetoric abound as he compares instant books with fast-food chains or poets with soccer stars.

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Debray also idealizes the *NRG*. Does he really believe that the labyrinthine corridors of the Oulipian offices have not witnessed as much subterfuge as the television studios? The *NRG*, Debray tells us, preserved a margin of independence from the dominant bourgeois culture. It might be more accurate, as well as more Marxist, to argue that the *NRG* mirrored the cross-currents of the Third

ITALO CALVINO:

If on a winter's night a traveller

260pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.

0 436 08271 3

In a recent review of Grass's *The Meeting at Telgte*, J.P. Stern remarked that "first the *nouveau roman* and now Gunter Grass are familiarizing us with the exploration of literature as its own theme, and with the sophisticated but rich and varied treasures which that theme has in store for us". Not everyone, of course, regards this prospect with such relish; but for those who do, *If on a winter's night a traveller* by Italo Calvino offers an early reward. True, the offer is made mechanically, at times, and comes in the form of a kind of flattery; but it speaks well for the health of European fiction as a whole that it can embrace such a completely notional fiction as this without a sense of waste - and equally well, incidentally, for the intellectual curiosity of the Italians, who bought more than eighty thousand copies of the present volume within the first month of publication.

It is a book which not only takes the exploration of literature for its theme, but does it, remarkably, from the reader's point of view: the experienced reader, that is, but not the professionally critical one - rather, the habitual book-investor who is aware that there is an interaction, an "up and down relationship", between his expectations and the text. By exercising those expectations (and stretching their tolerance, it must be said), Calvino celebrates the act and status of Readership. Scarcely for an instant, therefore, is the book simply "about" what is happening in the narrative, for it depends which narrative you mean. These are not unfamiliar ideas - readers of Borges and Nabokov are thoroughly at home with them - but they seldom have been played upon so consistently and exclusively as they are by Calvino here.

This makes the book, inevitably, a performance, a kind of parade of imaginative looseness, open-mindedness, prodigality; and, like all parades, it has its boring side, unless you feel able to give each "float" (a word Calvino would enjoy) a possibly undeserved degree of scrutiny as it passes by. Certain traditional objections to Calvino's whole output are bound to be reinforced. His cleverness drives out warmth, highly colorful though he claims to be in person. The identity of conscious man is of little account to him compared to the weaving of the dream. He is too much the fabulist; in fact his talent for spinning yarns prevents him from telling a story. And there is some small force in all these objections. I think there is a sense in which Calvino would like to contain all sorts of novelists within himself, without in the end deigning to be any of them. But who else is currently risking such a scheme, and getting away with it? In effect, Calvino has made a virtue of his lack of, or chronic impatience with, a convinced narrative standpoint.

All of which means that this book takes some explaining. *If on a winter's night a traveller* comes equipped with the first blurb I have seen which frankly gives up, professing helplessness. "Ignore this spluttering blurb," it chokes: "read the book". No book I've ever read has made me feel more like The Reader. Something of the kind is already implicit in the title, which suggests one of those diligently-distanced narratives in which nameless pilgrims grope their way into lodgings late at night, stumble over some dusty trunk in their attic bedroom, and uncover sheaves of an old anonymous manuscript telling the following strange story, etc. etc. It is an honourable tradition of narrative: antiquarian, frameworks within frameworks, setting up traditional expectations - which are comically defeated by Calvino's opening words: "You are about to begin."

## The writer versus the reader

By Russell Davies

reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveller*. He becomes, regrettably, a "traveler" inside the book, for all but the dust-jacket was printed in the USA. Just a little something else for the English reader to worry about.

Calvino proceeds to persuade and cajole the reader into a comfortable reading position: feet up, away from the TV, cigarettes within reach, or whatever. On horseback, even - "nobody ever thought of reading on horseback" (Calvino can't resist nibbling the reader to picture some fantastical option.) He passes on to the question of how we came by the book in the first place, and how we might classify it on our (mental) shelves. In Calvino's demonstration of his knowledge of what readers habitually get up to, this passage is very telling; he seems aware of all the phantom categories we operate. There are "the Books You Needn't Read, the Books Made For Purposes Other Than Reading, and Books Read Even Before You Open Them. Since They Belong To The Category of Books Read Before Being Written" (a typical Calvino category, *campato in aria*, but you know what he means). And so the list grows, taking in several more accurately recognizable categories, such as "Books You've Always Pretended To Have Read and Now It's Time To Sit Down and Really Read Them" and "Books That Everybody's Read So It's As If You Had Read Them, Too". (In witty passages of this kind, Calvino is as fortunate as ever in his translator, the faithfully flowing William Weaver.)

All the time this affectionate joshing of the reader is going on, the book is imperceptibly getting down to business. By the time Chapter 1 ends, the book in hand is no longer quite the one we first thought of. Chapter 1 is now succeeded not by Chapter 2, but by something calling itself *If on a winter's night a traveller*, which clearly has some claim to be considered as the Book We Thought We Were Dealing With In The First Place. Not that Calvino allows us a straightforward immersion in a "real" new text. From the start, he confounds and confuses the experience of reading with the shapes and patterns of the imagined world it evokes: "The novel begins in a railway station, a locomotive puffs steam from the piston covers the opening of the chapter, a cloud of smoke hides part of the first paragraph. . . . And Calvino develops this mannerism, of getting in the way, into a narrative method: he introduces a first-person narrator, but in explaining who 'I' is ('this is a "I" and you know nothing else about him') he simultaneously withholds the traditional autonomy from that narrating personality. Furthermore, the predicament 'I' finds himself in - he is involved in a thrillerish plot totalling an exchange of suitcases at the railway station, but his contact falls to turn up - is something 'I' comments on in a tone perplexingly like 'the authors'."

Getting rid of the suitcase was to be the first condition for re-establishing the previous situation: previous to everything that happens afterwards. This is what I mean when I say I would like to swim against the stream of time: I would like to erase the consequences of certain events and restore an initial condition.

"Swimming against the stream of time" to "restore an initial condition" certainly sounds like Calvino; but at this stage one can no longer be sure at what remove from *If on a winter's night* (the chapter, not the book) Calvino stands. So it is a relief when the station narrative comes to a normal chapter-ending sort of end: whereupon a chapter calling itself Chapter 2 takes over, in a tone recognizably related to that of Chapter 1: "You have now read about thirty pages and you're beginning to get into the story." End of story, evidently.

It's at this point that we have to join with Calvino in pretending that the book we are actually reading (the one published by Secker & Warburg at £6.95) is not physically the same article as the one Calvino keeps telling us we're reading. It's a small enough imaginative leap to make, but it does take us for the first time outside the strict page-for-page conventions of what is set before us, so in a way it does matter. It is the first small hiccup in the smooth acceleration of Calvino's fantasy. What we are required to assume is that the "I" narrative, the station-suitcase thriller, suddenly starts repeating itself, to our dismay:

Just when you are beginning to get truly interested, at this very point the author feels called upon to display one of those virtuoso tricks so customary in modern writing, repeating a paragraph word for word. Expect that the repetition runs not just to a paragraph, but to a whole "signature", a complete printer's segment of the book: a giant error has occurred at the hinder's. (No effort is made to reproduce this effect - it would have been a bit much to expect in these hard times for readers and publishers alike - but still it is felt as a small disappointment, I think, by the reader.)

Naturally, Calvino tells you, you take the book back to the book-seller. Familiar problem; lots of complaints already; notification from the publishers of a faulty batch of Calvino's. The pages of the maestro's book have been unaccountably mixed up with those of a Polish novel called *Outside the town of Malbork*, by Tazio Bazakbal. Having got interested in this anyway, you are only too pleased to take away a mint copy of his (presumably unaltered) thriller. As you do so, you encounter a young lady in the shop who has had the same disconcerting experience with the Calvino. She is an attractive young lady, and so ("this is what you were aiming at, O Reader, moving around her like a rattlesnake!") you exchange telephone numbers, in order, so you say, to compare notes on this odd experience in the art of readership. Thus it is all. By Chapter 2 the numerical chapters acquire a narrative impetus of their own, to be set against the many different styles and tones of the title chapters. For they are destined to alternate throughout Calvino's book.

There will be, in all, ten segments of variously attributed, disputed and apocryphal "works": ten new starts, or "incipits" as he is happy to call them. They begin, of course, with Tazio Bazakbal's *Outside the town of Malbork*, which turns out to have nothing to do with stations or suitcases or even thrillers. On the contrary, it appears to be some sort of psychological novel of adolescence set in the country somewhere in Eastern Europe. Again it is told at one remove (at least) - "The page you're reading should convey. . . and so on. Sending that your patience may be temporarily ebbed Calvino keeps things short.

Chapter 3 (opening with a serenade to the pleasures of the paper-knife, a theme rather lost on British readers, whose page-cutting is done for them) registers immediate doubts about the *Malbork* piece. It didn't seem particularly Polish, and the places mentioned in it turn out not to be in the presently constituted Poland at all. They apparently belong to a formerly-independent state called Cimieria, whose culture is now in decay. If not complete abeyance. This presents an ideal opportunity for getting in touch with Ludmilla, the Other Reader you met in the shop, but when you ring her number, it proves to be that of her sister Lotaria, an atheistic if not downright antipathetic figure, who far from sharing Ludmilla's professed enjoyment of this "work of fiction" (which is a novel, of course, when you start reading it), immediately wants to know "the author's position with regard to Trends of Contemporary

ary Thought and Problems that Demand a Solution". Fortunately Ludmilla comes to the phone before an ugly scene sets in between yourself and Lotaria (whom it would be overly provocative to call a critic straight out, but who is plainly what that happy English idiom calls "one of nature's critics").

Ludmilla, naturally, has a constructive plan: to consult a Professor of Cimierian literature at the local university. Your description of the text rings a bell with Professor Uzzi-Uzzi. He recognizes the putative Bazakbal material as part of *Leaning from a steep slope* by the Cimierian poet Ukko Ahil. It is no surprise when he begins to read to you, translating aloud, from his copy of the work (another chapter), which proves to be different matter altogether. In no time, an academic feud has broken out between Uzzi-Uzzi and his colleague Galligani, of the department of Cimierian literature, which claims the Ahil fragment (a fortuitous pun in the English) for its own claim, indeed, that the words in question form not a fragment at all but a complete and *bona fide* Cimieric classic signed with a different pseudonym, Vorts Villand. A specimen chapter of Villand inexorably follows; it has, perhaps, a Pasternakian tinge. (One is aware by now that between the numerical literary-detective-story chapters and the titled "incipits" a certain flattening-out of style occurs in translation, even a translation as confident as this one. We have to take Calvino's word for it, offered in interviews after publication, that his ten fragments were conceived not as stylistic parodies, but only as differently constructed possibilities in

the art of simultaneously mobilizing a fictional world and the reader's curiosity.)

In order to keep this chain of apocrypha going, Calvino now resorts to a conspiracy theory. Having decided now to tackle the publishers head-on, you, the Reader, are referred to a sort of Dickensian ledger-clerk called Mr Caveadegna. (This is a nice portrait of that indispensable social figure, the Only Man In The Firm Who Really Knows What's Going On. Hearteningly, Calvino tends to get these incidental figures just about right.) It is Caveadegna's view that a translator called Ermes Marana is the source of the trouble. Having acquired some trashy fiction by a Belgian called Vandervelde, he has evidently been passing it off at various times as Cimierian, Cimbric or Polish. Caveadegna has to hand the original French text of the first few pages. . . and at this important point, when the Lotaria-led personalities among his readers will really be wondering whether it's worth soldiering on, Calvino throws in what is, for sheer narrative impetus, probably his strongest "incipit": in which a man and a woman tour Paris in a car, trying to dispose of a large plastic bag containing a farthing corpse called Jojo. William Weaver here conspicuously enjoys reproducing the reckless atmospheres of the early Godard films. It is a torment (not least for the Ludmilla among us) to see this perfectly good story come to its interim "end", although the mind adjusts more quickly than you might imagine to the task of treating these separate fictional "departures" as finished articles in themselves. Nevertheless, you feel you cannot leave without

**July Books**

**Non-Fiction**

**SONYA**  
**The Life of Countess Tolstoy**  
**Anne Edwards**  
 The biography of an extraordinary woman caught in a passionate and turbulent marriage with a man all the world regarded as a god, based on letters and unpublished diaries.  
*Illustrated* £8.60

**ESCAPE FROM THE FRENCH**  
**Captain Hewson's Narrative 1803-1809**  
**Edited by Antony Brett-James**  
 A compelling and true story of adventure set at the time of the Napoleonic Wars in the form of an original account recently discovered by the Hewson family.  
*Illustrated* (Published in association with Webb and Bower) £9.95

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## The occupying censor

By David Pryce-Jones

GERHARD HELLER:

Un Admendant à Paris

214pp. Paris: Seuil.

Gerhard Heller arrived at the Gare du Nord in Paris on November 9, 1940, which happened to be his thirty-first birthday. A mild and modest man, pacifist by nature, he felt himself a friend among friends; he had spent an academic year in France and knew the language. Yet he was visibly an enemy now, in uniform, with the rank of Sonderführer, a promotion reserved for civilians like himself drafted for their special skills. He had been appointed to the Propaganda-Staffel, that department of the German military administration which had to deal with all aspects of the arts and the press in occupied France. The immediate conflict of emotions in him was such, he writes, that a steady early-morning cognac at the station buffet almost overcame him.

Famous buildings in the city were draped with Nazi banners. The Majestic Hotel had been requisitioned for the military administration, but Heller had a room at the Berkolay, while his offices were nearby at 52 avenue des Champs-Élysées. On only his second day there, conscience and duty were dramatically opposed. The laying of an Armistice Day wreath evolved into an anti-German demonstration - the largest, as it turned out, during the entire Occupation. Over 100 students were arrested. Four or five of them were brought into 52 avenue des Champs-Élysées, where Heller took his chance and told them to cut and run. "I was trembling," he writes characteristically, "I think I was a good deal more frightened than they were by the first act of resistance; at that point, however, the anguish which I may say was never to leave me throughout the Occupation."

Pinned in charge of the literature section of the Propaganda-Staffel, he had powers to approve or deny publication of French works. In theory this might have been the prime source of his guilt, but in fact the Propaganda-Staffel

had already been set up in accordance with wider German policy, and obedience to initiative was demanded. With great efficiency, the German authorities had followed up the blitzkrieg victory by making it clear that life for the French under occupation could resume normally in every sphere, provided German interests were not harmed.

Publishing-houses were quick to grasp the point, and to impose censorship voluntarily upon themselves. The manuscripts waiting on Heller's desk were therefore by writers who were pro-German or at least Vichyste by conviction, such as Benoit-Léon, Jacques Chardonne, Drieu La Rochelle, Brasillach, Henri Bordeaux, Alfred Fabre-Luce. Borderline cases remained few and far between, though Heller was to have the excitement of recognizing Camus's *L'Étranger*, and passing it.

Quite apart from his position as censor, and his social connections with Otto Abetz at the German Embassy, Heller was worth cultivating for himself, it was not long before he was something of a man about town. With Ernst Haffner, he was one of the Germans regularly invited to the famous "Jeudi" lunches of Florence Gould, and so knew Cocteau, Paul Léautaud, Marcel Arland, Joughandeu, it was perhaps over-ingenious of him to be surprised by expressions of antisemitism from Joughandeu, or sympathy towards Germany on the part of Giraudoux. When Jean Glono or Drieu seemed too naive in their view of German intentions, he tried to restrain them, earning a noble in Drieu's diary the epithet "Heller, nuireusement à l'ache . . ." To be addressed by Brasillach as "co-éther, Océrid" was all very well, but to be called a liberal by him in public was akin to denunciation. As a propaganda exercise, he had to organize the trips of selected French writers to Germany, but really he believed in "literature" as something apart, and valuable without reference to anything else. To glimpse Valéry or Sartre, to be introduced to Péguy and his circle was thrill enough for this cultural hero-worshiper.

As the Occupation lengthened, Heller could not escape appeals to use his influence on behalf of those in trouble. This was certainly anguishing Jean

Paulhan was someone he helped to free from arrest, and with whom he afterwards became firm friends, considering him a mentor who opened his eyes to some options unconsciously derived from the Nazis. For others, nothing could be done. Max Jacob, interned at Drancy, died there almost at once, and Heller could only make his solitary way to the camp and throw a rose over the barbed wire.

No relationship between occupier and occupied was quite without an ambivalent playing-with-fire element, and Heller briefly and fascinatingly describes how a teenage girl whom he calls Relnette came to the Berkeley and egged him on sexually. Jacques, a young boy, did much the same. Revelations along these lines are not usually so candidly relayed. Heller had fallen in love with his secretary Marie-Louise, later to become his wife. She was from Hamburg, and the loneliness of his position as a German who rejected Nazism was thereby lessened, though it took its toll, leaving him prey to a debilitating nervous disease (diagnosed by Céline, as it happened). Still, looking back, he can say with some wistfulness that those were happy years.

With the exception of Jünger and his diaries, Germans have left few personal records of the Occupation. Shortly before being evacuated from Paris, Heller buried his notebooks and afterwards was never able to find them. What he remembers may be fragmentary and anecdotal but it carries conviction because he makes so few claims for himself. An intellectual, perhaps a charming lightweight, he would have preferred to bury his head in books and bother nobody, but could still rise to the occasion when he had to. Germans were not required to make martyrs of themselves: in order to stop Hitler's simple decency of Heller's kind would have been enough.

Around Jean-Paul Sartre, literature, et philosophe. (233pp. Gallimard/décès) is the result of a colloquium on Sartre held at the Free University of Brussels. It includes papers by Pierre Verstraeten on Sartre, on rapport à la névrose objective, and by Robert Legros on Sartre et le romantisme.



Cricket books can be deadly dull. Page after page has been wasted trying to put this beautiful and dangerous game on to paper, but this is not one of them. There are some delightful vignettes: MacLaren, hurrying away from him the ball he has just caught and saying "It's melted! an Australian fence was melting!" devouring curry and shouting "Ood on yer, Lawry!" between mouthfuls (it is actually a revelation that Lawry had a fan at all); Hammond spending the luncheon interval with Travers's borrowed field glasses; Travers, trained on the Ladies' Enclosure by Sydney but not by the ladies; the "Gangster" opinion of unproductive morning bowling; Flinders and Sandham; Travers asking him how he had got on: "It's like trying to bowl to God on concrete," replied

## Criminal proceedings

John Putnam Thatcher is at the Lake Placid Winter Olympics, where the Sloan Guaranty Trust has a monopoly of banking services; which turns out to be not quite the next best thing to counting money when dead traveller's sniper pulls a hooding in. And then a event with a bullet. This is not the typical Emma Lofgren mixture, but who would have it otherwise? Character, intelligent, and witty entertainment that you know precisely what it is.

Scots gunsmith Kalth Calder, now a reformed character leading a quiet family life, is jolted into violent action when, following an attempt to burn down his shop, his wife is attacked and nearly killed. Gerald Hammond's third novel, set in the Lowland Scots town of Newton-Lander is every bit as good as the two earlier ones: well-written and put together with a pleasantly rebellious, individual hero who once again takes on the system and wins.

Although the perspective remains constant in each section devoted to each of these characters, the narrative itself switches between several different types of discourse. Thus the "Billy" section is constituted as fol-

...a more *habile* mode of soap opera  
women's magazine fiction. The  
greenable *frisson* of surprise experi-  
enced as one encounters the diffi-  
cult discourses in the Billy section is  
sustained because the other sec-  
tions follow almost exactly the same

...cavesdropping on another's private fantasy life. This feeling is intensified when the fantasy is explicitly sexual, as is the case with Tom. The poem series of off-color jokes and sexual metaphors, the natural, the comic medium for the expression of sexual desires. Expressive it certainly is, but it is also kinetic, to use Stephen Dedalus's word, whereas the aesthetic emotion should be "static," the mind arrested and raised above desire and "loathing". In the creation of *Starlight* the reader is tempted to see the characters' desires and loathing as "static," as if any traditionally Platonic text; and since these characters are ultimately of limited human interest, the final effect of the novel is rather lowering to the spirits. The attribution from Brian O'Nolan (Brian O'Brien) with which it begins seems altogether too serious: "The funniest thing in the world is the funniest bloody thing in hell made of the world."

A general phenomenon which found surprising is the large role played in these tales and conversations by God, and the perfectly natural way the children talk of a being generally reckoned to be either dead or peculiarly detached. Orthodoxly enough, God has created everything. (An amusing piece of back-to-front reasoning serves to account for the diversity of languages: if there were only one language, God wouldn't have felt called on to create China, Japan etc.) But Eddie objects, some ideas come from

An even shorter term for the species of pedagogy — "Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in the Grand Old Land of America!" — was "Factualness." Grandgully had admired some of the attitudes revealed here. In a sustained exchange on the "tooth fairy," evidently a subject of current interest, he had discussed the rights and wrongs of passing

As a boy of nine, Travers saw Gra open the billing for England in the Oval Test of 1896. He made only 24 in this low-scoring match, but Travers later watched him make a century in partnership with Ranji, despite a little fracas concerning a possible catch short-leg when he was in his twenties. He saw Jessop's match-winning



**By Claire Tomalin**

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# Soldiers and statesmen

By Brian Bond

JOHN GOOCH:

The Prospect of War  
Studies in British Defence Policy 1847-1942

163pp. Cass. £11.  
0 7146 3128 0

Twenty years ago, researching into later Victorian and Edwardian military history was a rather lonely occupation and, apart from a re-assessment of the Cardwell reforms, there was not much sense of a scholarly debate. Since then, however, it has become quite a popular area of study and several younger scholars have thoroughly explored particular aspects of military reform and reorganization. Prominent among them is John Gooch, thanks mainly to his book *The Plans of War* (1974), which traced the development of the general staff from its origins in the end of the First World War, but also to several significant articles published in him in books and journals. *The Prospect of War* brings together six of these, originally published between 1968 and 1977, together with two new essays. One of the latter, a survey of invasion threats and their impact on plans for home defence, covers the century from the 1840s, when steam-powered war supposedly "bridged the Channel" for French invasion, via the perennial project for a Channel tunnel (1882, 1919, 1981) to the waning of the German threat after 1940. But apart from this chapter, the dates in Gooch's sub-title are misleading because all the other essays are concerned with the period 1900-18.

Two themes especially have interested him in this shorter period and give this collection a fair degree of coherence and sense of unity. The major theme is the transition in foreign policy and strategy from preoccupation with the defence of a scattered empire in an era of naval dominance and so-called "splendid isolation", to the acceptance of a continental commitment against Germany with its implications of political obligation and an unprecedented military effort. Within this framework, Gooch is fascinated by the minor theme of the early evolution of the bureaucracy for decision-making in defence (what another pioneer in this field, Franklin A. Johnson, has termed "defence by committee") and particularly the soldiers' part in it.

He is a self-proclaimed "gradualist" in the sense that close acquaintance with the sources has convinced him that there was no sudden, dramatic swing away from empire and towards the Continent in 1905-6, but rather a steady shift in priorities from the mid 1890s to 1910. Among the leading military *dramatis personae* in this development were Arthur, Earl of Salisbury, Ewart, Lytton, Nicholson, Robertson and Wilson. Most of these names will be unfamiliar to all but a few specialists, so it is a pity that more biographical information is not given about them here, or better still, an essay on the social and professional background of the military élite who formed the General Staff. Nevertheless, this collection provides a salutary corrective. In the author's sympathetic treatment of the service officers' role in the formulation of defence policy, to the popular stereotype of "self-seeking incompetents as immortalized in *Oh, What a Lovely War*", but also purveyed more indistinctly by certain scholars who are taken to task in the references, Gooch's judgment, which is surely as true of Whitcomb's warriors today as in 1906, is that "the soldiers who grappled with these problems were not malign, blinkered, nor unduly xenophobic; they were honest, and often extremely able men struggling at best they might with the limited resources at their command to provide their country with security, not just in present circumstances but in future ones."

In view of Britain's naval supremacy, the persisting fear of a "bolt from the blue", as the threat of seaborne invasion was dramatically called before the advent of air-power, is surprising and full of ironies. In the 1840s even the Duke of Wellington, not normally regarded as a pacifist, warned that Britain was vulnerable to invasion anywhere, but under the guns of Dover Castle, yet

it is doubtful if the French, then, or later, had any serious plans for making the attempt. In the aftermath of Prussia's defeat of France in 1870, Sir George Chesney initiated a spate of invasion fiction with his best-selling story *The Battle of Dorking*, which was truly futuristic in that the imagined enemy had virtually no navy. A new wave of invasion literature after 1900, such as Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, could at least point to a potential threat in the expanding German fleet, but in fact German naval planners were never sanguine about the prospects of full-scale invasion as distinct from limited raids. The real point of much alarmist fiction (as in contemporary accounts of "The Third World War"), was to alert the nation to the need for greater military preparedness, whether in the form of the Volunteer Movement or of some kind of national service.

Whether the mass readership of this invasion literature took it seriously may be doubted. In 1895 Alfred Harmsworth ran a luridly advertised newspaper serial, including references to the dire fate of local dignitaries, entitled "The Siege of Portsmouth", but he still failed in his bid to win a Parliamentary seat in that constituency. The campaign for compulsory military training gained impetus from the deficiencies exposed by the Boer War, and indirectly did some good in encouraging physical fitness and basic military skills, but its emphasis on home defence was not conducive to a dispassionate reappraisal of the Army's priorities. Indeed, during the whole "Bolt from the Blue" controversy non-navalists failed to grasp, or even to admit, that if the Royal Navy completely lost control of the sea-approaches it would be easier for an opponent to strike Britain into surrender than to attempt a hazardous invasion.

Even after Russia's defeat by Japan in 1904-5, the former's threat to Afghanistan continued to obsess the powerful India lobby. The waning of this issue is examined through the brief term of Sir George Clarke as the first secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence from 1904 to 1907. Clarke was a rare type indeed; a scientific soldier who was also a navalist in outlook and yet was firmly orientated towards Europe. He regarded Simla's obsession with Afghanistan as puerile and sought to convince Kitchener that to maintain 155,000 British troops in a forward position would require five million camels, while the Russians could not supply more than 1,500 troops in Kabul through the winter. Kitchener was unimpressed by Clarke's data and after a clash with Sir John Fisher Clarke gladly quit the Committee, later recalling plaintively that he had spent the best part of his life "trying to make great and eminent people do what I think is right". Hankey later demonstrated how this could be done of the Committee by a less obtrusive and more indirect approach.

Though fortunately it was never put to the test, Gooch shows that British military planners had to take seriously the possibility of war with the United States in defence of Canada. This was an unattractive proposition, not merely because Canada was indefensible by land or sea, but also because Anglo-American trade was worth £400 million per annum. This detailed and bizarre exercise relates to the broader theme of the volume in revealing the utter incompatibility of the army and navy solutions, and the inability of the Committee of Imperial Defence to reconcile them. Here was already evident a serious flaw in inter-service relations which was to contribute to the failure in the Dardanelles campaign. Incidentally, I disagree with Gooch when he criticizes Sir Ian Hamilton for rejecting Ewart for a command at Gallipoli on the grounds that he was too fat to fit into a trench.

At one stage the defence of Canada ranked fourth out of five major operations envisaged for an expeditionary force. Though Clarke, Robertson and others called attention to the growing German threat to France and Belgium, it is a popular mistake to believe that this southern general monopolized the War Office and the Army's attention from 1905. Gooch argues persuasively that the Continental commitment was by no means as clear-cut in Haldane's mind

when he undertook the reorganization of the Army in 1906 as his own post-war memoirs would suggest: "The coincidence of Haldane's advent to office, the Anglo-French staff conversations and the creation of the Expeditionary Force was indeed a coincidence and no more." Edward Spiers has developed the same thesis at greater length in *Haldane: an Army Reformer* (1980), but is more critical of the War Minister for so confusing the issue later. However, as Gooch points out, to deprive Haldane of the claim to extraordinary foresight is at the same time to free him from accusations of deception and to make him a human rather than a superhuman figure.

The essay on "Soldiers, Strategy and War Aims" is an important contribution to the study of civil-military relations in the First World War because it shows that generals and politicians held very different notions of "war aims" and how they were to be realized. Gooch believes that the generals, and Robertson in particular, had a more realistic view of what could be achieved with the limited forces available but were unable to get their expert advice accepted. He makes a good case for the military preoccupation with the Western Front, but it is well to remember that that generation of commanders had been brought up on the Napoleonic maxim of concentration of superior forces on the decisive front. This could manifest itself as a dogmatic opposition to the dispatch of any troops or weapons to other fronts.

This debate is taken up from the general's viewpoint in Gooch's concluding essay on "The Maurice Debate", which also illustrates the continuing lack of rapport between soldiers and politicians in the final year of the war. Sir Frederick Maurice, Director of Military Operations at the War Office until April 1918, sacrificed his military career in a vain attempt to expose political mismanagement of the war. Unfortunately for Maurice, he felt constrained to publicize specific charges by challenging Government statements on the number of troops in France in January 1918, compared with a year earlier, and the length of the French front. He had been obliged to take over before the German breakthrough in March 1918. His task made easier by a weak statement of the Opposition's case from Asquith, Lloyd George successfully rebutted Maurice's allegations, though he is now known to have ignored corrected statistics which did not support his case.

All serious students of this subject will be glad to have these scattered articles available in one volume (albeit at a high price and without an index), while regretting that an opportunity has been missed to expand some of the topics; for example "The War Office and the Curragh Incident" is examined here only for the new light cast by the Ewart diaries; and an assessment of Ewart's role in the early years of the CID would have made a splendid companion piece to the essay on Clarke. This is nevertheless a stimulating book with a considerable revisionist bias regarding the relationship between soldiers and statesmen. It can be read with profit by those concerned with Britain's contemporary defence policy as well as the historians for whom it is primarily intended.

*World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1981*, produced by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (581pp. £19.50. Taylor and Francis Ltd. 0 85066 215 X) includes, after an Introduction dealing with "World military spending" and "Developments in nuclear weapons", chapters on (among others) the following aspects of world-wide nuclear and conventional armaments: "The evolution of military technology, and of defence strategy"; "A decade of military uses of outer space"; "Nuclear explosions"; and "The prohibition of inhumane and indiscriminate weapons". The book as a whole reflects in remarkable detail the general position put by Frank Barnaby in his *Foreword*. Taken together, the last ten Yearbooks are a record of an alarming increase in world armaments. Tragically, there has been virtually no real progress in negotiations for disarmament.

## Foreign Travel

A Daring Journey by a Man of Letters Along the Loire from Source to Mouth or Thereabouts in 1912

He took a night express, first class, from Nantes to Paris, And at last Asar was soft below his arse, So long ago, so long ago.

The Loire'd been small and slow and fast, The Loire'd been wild and also narrow, And full of sand and vary shallow, So long ago, so long ago.

He'd found the French ate spitted sparrow, As walls long blind lags of frogs, And little carts were pulled by dogs, So long ago, so long ago.

Imus had bad beds and smelly bogs, And wine the whole way down the Loire Had been too often weak and sour, So long ago, so long ago.

Pas autre chose, hélas, à boire, And tout droit hadn't mount turn right, And he'd been blitzy day and night, So long ago, so long ago.

And flies buzzed black around the ripe On butchers' stalls down shifty alleys, And thorns blocked off most tamping valleys, So long ago, so long ago.

Bored with endless silver sallies Prom pointed Garbar de Junc Most of the flow to distant Nantes, So long ago, so long ago.

He'd thought that what these Franchemen want Is fewer Joans of Arc in plaster, And fewer memories of disaster So long ago, so long ago.

And trains that travel rather faster, Nantes, Paris, Calais, Dover, His venture now is safely over, Long ago, so long ago.

Nantes, Paris, Calais, Dover, Now at last he's back at rest Where every single thing is best, And even navvies wear a vest, Long ago, so long ago.

Geoffrey Grigson

## A Poem in Doubt

I have a dream this year, Which is a factory sold To friends: but when the auctioneer Has finished, what they own and hold Has passed to me. I mean The large rooms high and clean, And gardens blossoming with flowers, And beds of fruit-trees. There the powers

Of darkness and the night Sweep down through owls in flight And fill the barns. The common blades Of axes are as blunt as spades

And do no work. The hand Of someone unseen moves His trowel through, and, lightly panned, Scatters the seedlings into grooves.

This was a dream, I hear - A voice beside my ear Report. That bousa you dream of dias. Look for a place of proper size

Down which no fungus crawls And eat: low callings, whence no beast Leaks out, and leaves you frozen feet,

And workless hours. I see Close to the kitchen door One shed for tools: and one dwarfed tree Beside the gate. You dreamad before

Too often of that grange Where you could so arrange All things to meet the needs of grace Appropriate to a country place.

Drawn in your horns, I say, And turn that house away. Where all your energy would fail. Find something more on your own scale.

That was a dream, too. Gull In common clothes of brown Came through the double doors I built, And meered, and pulled my great bous down.

George MacBeth

## Describing the indescribable

By Robin Robbins

JOHN BEATTIE:

The Yorkshire Ripper Story  
160pp. Quartet/Daily Star. £2.50.  
0 7043 3388 0

DAVID A. YALLOP

Deliver Us From Evil  
374pp. Macdonald Futurn. £6.95  
(paperback, £1.75).  
0 354 04565 2

On the pavement outside a block of Sheffield council-flats where a woman had fallen to her death earlier in the day there was a blond-stained patch of sawdust. Round it stood a group of children, daring the boldest to dip his toe in the sludge. Not far away, up Cemetery Road, kids had been plundering graves, throwing the bones about and trying in soil sales to antique dealers. In *The Yorkshire Ripper Story* John Beattie presents some gravediggers' reminiscences of Peter Sutcliffe's behaviour while working with them. According to one, he cut off corpses' fingers to steal rings, yanked out gold tooth-fillings with pliers, and, more significantly, revelled in decomposing and mutilated remains. Another recalls that "he had this awful habit of lurking in the ' Chapel of Rest', a ward that when Sutcliffe became a mortuary attendant it was the bodies of accident victims and of those opened up for post-mortems that he liked best."

The gruesome games of children need not be taken as a sign of a generation of rippers in the making, rather as a normal phase in coming to terms with death, a phase which for Sutcliffe did not pass. Nevertheless, David A. Yallop in another example of the thriving Ripper-book industry, *Deliver Us From Evil*, is right to assert that the breeding-ground for Sutcliffe's crimes had existed for many years. Yallop sees Sutcliffe's attitudes being fostered in the widespread acceptance of violence against women; it is perhaps more accurately described as a general immaturity which finds violence easier to accept than sex. When housewife Emily Jackson was murdered, what set the wire-cut heads of local gossip a-wagging, according to Yallop, was not her horrible death, but the fact that she had turned whore.

Many people eagerly enjoy the killing of their fellow-beings, the bloodier and more painful the better. Social decorum demands a veil of pretext: the victims must be different in some way more or less superficial - foreign, or black, or gay, or female, or "no better than they should be". While it was wrongly put about by the police that the Ripper attacks were only on prostitutes, the Great British Public enjoyed its tabloid doses and let him get on with it. Not until the police produced an "innocent" victim - innocent sexually, that is - did the tribe howl for vengeance; its quiet, vicious relish giving way to the pleasure of the hunt. To their credit, both Yallop and Beattie vehemently denounce the hypocrisy of a society which takes it for granted that women who exchange sex for money on the streets deserve to be murdered, an assumption implicit not only in the attitudes of police and public, but in the words of the prosecutor and the judge at Sutcliffe's trial. Beattie's question, "Is not this the same priggish mentality which, in its extreme form, led Sutcliffe to kill?" wrongly ascribes the force of motive to mere sanction, but is worth pondering.

It may be objected that to single out the reliable clues is easier now than it was then. There were misleading descriptions of the attacker and his ear which could not at that time be discounted. Yallop himself makes mistakes which, given his hindsight, are less excusable: he writes "Walsfield" for "Halifax"; the ear he supposes to have been used for the attack on Marilyn Moore changes from Ford Corvair to Morris Oxford and back again; the deductions he makes from tyre-marks are confused. Nevertheless, the hard clues were not so numerous as to be impossible to check during the 700,000 police man-hours costing £6,000,000 (according to Yallop; less plausibly 5,000,000) during the hunt for the Ripper. Beattie's account, according to Beattie's own interviews, was asked for a blood sample. If the boots fitted, as well as the £5 note, it seems possible that a thorough check of cars be had owed and used would have saved seven lives.

We are members of a society which offered as compensation to a victim who survived skull-fractures and stab-wounds in her abdomen and back "less", as Yallop puts it, "than the cost of the meals eaten by the police officers during the particular enquiry into the attack" (the victim was later attacked by other men, and later still we find her for shoplifting). Our universally educated society gave ear to the woefully fatuous fallacies of a "clairaudient", an "occultist", "map-drawers", astrologers, and other quacks, fools and lunatics who leapt into the light of the

Ripper hunt. And when, a few weeks after Sutcliffe's twelfth known murder, the police hopelessly played the hoax tape over the loudspeakers at Leeds United football ground, the fans drowned it with chants of "You'll never catch the Ripper!" and "Twelve nil! Twelve nil!" Nor were those lads the only ones with cause to rejoice: when the tape was put on a telephone answering machine, British Telecom, as it now is, netted an estimated £40,000.

After listing half a dozen unsolved murders in West Yorkshire between 1970 and 1977, Yallop asks: "Exactly how many murderers were and are still on the loose in Yorkshire?" It would be facile, however, to look on killing as simply a local sport east of the Pennines: the sickening story of the Yorkshire Ripper only re-emphasizes what is evident from the Old Testament as well as today's newspapers: that a large proportion of the human race finds both pleasure and profit in bloodshed, so long as the victim is someone else.

Yallop is a campaigning as well as an investigative journalist (as the press release reminds us, he is "the author of... the true story behind the Fatty Arbuckle scandal", and two other books on murder cases). His campaign here is primarily against the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester police. Although the Ripper was widely supposed during his rampage to be meticulously careful and successful in leaving no identifiable traces, clues accumulated from quite early on. His fifth listed victim gave an accurate description of him and his car, according to Yallop, that was disregarded because the police assumed there was no link with the two murders of prostitutes in Leeds in the preceding six months. A year later, after two more murders, they had a complete set of tyre-marks, a clear footprint, and a bloody handprint. Ten weeks later they had a bloody palm-print and a car-description that was nearly accurate. Three months later they made an almost total mess of a very precise lead. It had been followed up as quickly as possible, could have directed them to one particular pay-packet. In another couple of months they had a full set of tyre-marks again, plus a surviving victim's description that included the conspicuous "Jason King" moustache. Within six months came yet another set of tyre-marks, detectably changed. A year later the size 7 bootprint appeared again.

That Sutcliffe killed at least seven more times after he was first questioned; that he was allegedly interviewed on nine occasions without the police realizing he was the man they were looking for; that he had been questioned in September 1969 for hitting a woman over the head in the Bradford district where he later perpetrated four known attacks; and that he had been convicted in the same month after pursuing a prostitute with a hammer, and been fined for "going equipped for theft" - all these matters of history give grounds for questioning police perceptiveness and procedures.

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At least the police were persistent: they persisted in believing the attacker was interested only in prostitutes, and always acted in the same way, thus discounting useful clues from attacks on other women. They persisted in believing the author of the hoax letters and tape was the Ripper himself, though the idea had been discredited in irrefutable detail by both the Northumbrian police and academic experts. They persisted in romanticizing the hunt as one officer's personal crusade, a limiting approach that undermined team-morale. They persisted in rejecting suggestions of outside help.

Some of them may have been needlessly callous.

Ripper investigation of incompetence after Sutcliffe's twelfth known murder, and obnoxious wrong-headedness. Routine procedures were carried out over and over again without success. This was partly due to the nature of the task: during one reconstruction, out of 700 people interviewed only one had seen the victim. But even when standard techniques turned up information, it lay fruitlessly in the files, so that the thought imaginatively imparted to Sutcliffe by Yallop - "So much for all those bloody cross-referenced index files they keep going on about" - has its point. At times the police mindshowed the agility of a dinosaur, as, for example, in the interviewing of all first-year students at Bradford: they had come up to University a month after the murder in question, had mostly been about fourteen when the Ripper attacks started in earnest, and had been living in nether parts of England.

By ordinary police standards there appear to have been gross lapses in professional competence. Twenty-seven days were lost by the Manchester police in the affair of the £5 note (symbolically, they even lost their way to Baildon, near Bradford). It took nearly three years for someone to think of checking the registration-numbers of cars seen in the red-light districts. Officers on house-to-house questioning accepted (and probably had to accept, so woefully was the exercise's conception) alibis so unverifiable as to render their efforts pointless. When Sutcliffe was questioned about the bank-note he was not, according to Yallop, asked about his car; no fingerprints were taken, nor palm-prints, nor shoe-size, nor blood-group. He was caught out in lying that he had not been in Manchester at the time in question: though double checking showed he had, it was not followed up. The bloodstained handbag of his last murder victim was filed away by Leeds policemen as lost property, while her body remained undiscovered fifty yards away for a further nine or ten hours.

Unsurprisingly, it was not the West Yorkshire or Greater Manchester forces which caught Sutcliffe, but South Yorkshire. After the hymeneast to the local evening paper in 1979, naming Sheffield as on the Ripper's itinerary, the local force had vowed to nab him if he ever set foot on their patch. They had not only Sutcliffe's subterfuges to cope with, but their West Yorkshire colleagues, whose Ripper Squad replied to the post-arrest inquiry: "Oh he's all right. We've already questioned him." At Dewsbury, the West Yorkshire police were ready to let him out on bail on the number-plates charge; it was the insistence of an uneasy woman police-officer which prevented the release. Perhaps the force needs more women as well as more brains. It still needed the confidence of the Sheffield police, inspiring a successful search for the weapons, to break through where a day's questioning by West Yorkshire detectives failed.

Misjudgment in the Ripper investigation was persistent in to the end, and then at the highest level, with the Chief Constable clearly implying at the press conference, after the arrest that an untried defendant was guilty beyond reasonable doubt. As Yallop points out earlier in his book, and as the reviewer can confirm from watching a CID interview, policemen tend to ape their television images: unfortunately, it was his American counterparts that Chief Constable Gregory aped.

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Having their photograph taken (1970). This Lowry drawing in pencil and felt pen is included in a sale of Modern British and Continental pictures, watercolours, drawings and sculpture, to be held at Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 on July 22.

"Are you X's father?"  
"Yes, and I'll kill her when she comes in for staying out all night and not letting us know."  
"You won't have to. Someone's already done that."

More disquieting than this piece of reported dialogue are Mr Yallop's allegations that another victim's parents were kept needlessly in acute suspense for five hours, and that while prostitutes were being used as live bait in Bradford in 1979-80 officers sat in a car and watched one being attacked, without helping or calling help because they were only there to collect car-numbers. However, let anyone should fear that the heroes in blue lack sympathy or courage, they did manage to arrest eleven women picketing a cinema showing *Violation of the Blech*. We may thank the force for preserving our freedom to make money by displaying the aggressive humiliation of women.

Yallop records less amusing episodes, such as the scene in which policemen forced a victim's boyfriend to give a semen specimen - to ascertain his blood-group. The investigation also produced, according to Yallop, other fringe-benefits for parliament: a woman had to submit to rape by two Manchester policemen who threatened to "make it look like a Yorkshire Ripper job". There are presumably men who, far from asking why those two were not prosecuted, think it was over-harsh to dismiss them for "a bit of fun". When two officers were found to have fraudulently claimed substantial overtime and expenses for "non-existent work", the police hunt was on for the colleague who scotched the arrangement for them to resign without publicity by leaking it to the press. This official response fits a pattern, a pattern so widely known that it is irresponsible of the Home Office to fob the public off with inquiries into police conduct supervised entirely by the police.

Both of these books advance theories about Sutcliffe's personality. Beattie reports the late Deputy Assistant Chief Constable Dennis Hoban (highly thought of by both writers) as saying to him that the killer could be either "a nut who gets some sort of kick out of killing women", choosing prostitutes because they are out at night alone and willing to get into cars, or "the kind of nut who bears a grudge against his kind, telling him to go out and clean up the streets". Approximately prophesying the issues of the trial, Beattie's opinion is that Sutcliffe is "a psychopathic sadist" who to start with

had perhaps "justified his atrocities in his own mind by cloaking them with a perverted sort of morality". Beattie provides some relevant personal history: as well as the gross horrors of Sutcliffe's time at the cemetery in 1964, there was in the same year his attempt to cut off his best friend's penis, and three years earlier his leadership of a Hell's Angels gang. His mother, an unjoined strict sexual morality, rejecting a daughter who got pregnant before marriage. Two years after the family forced his mother to break off an extra-marital affair of her own, Sutcliffe started killing.

On its own, this situation suggests a Hamlet-Ophelia-Ophelia set-up, but Sutcliffe's already established morbid and violence must be remembered. They dispose also of Yallop's conventionally sentimental idea that it was Sutcliffe's wife's childlessness that set him off. His first known murder occurred only eleven months after his marriage: his first known attack, for which he was cautioned, five years before. Yallop postulates "a raging evil jealousy because so many of his victims had children... All the victims were of child-bearing age." This is mere speculation: the preoccupation with children is Yallop's own (he constantly reminds readers of the victims' offspring, and enumerates them at the front of the book); one of the victims was only sixteen, four others in their forties. Prostitutes do not lope to mind as a group blessed with large, happy families. Beattie strains belief less with his portrait of a man with "couldn't bear straight sex" with a fifteen-year-old girlfriend - "It used to disturb him even talking about it" - a man who behaved as "a perfect gentleman" with "decent girls", but found his compelling pleasures in the red-light district he visited the night before his marriage, a man for whom, given both his relish for corpses and his conventional hypocrisy, repression, and guilt about sex, "the penetration of the knife or screw-driver had come to mean more than the penetration of the penis. There is some evidence that the act of killing caused him to ejaculate."

Yallop is not totally loyal to his thesis of child-envy; at one point he imagines Sutcliffe enraged by seeing whores busier than ever in Chapelton, soon after a murder. *Deliver Us From Evil* reads in many places like a work of fiction, swelled with attributed thought, speech, and action, whose nature is dictated by assumptions the author has already made. With regard to Sutcliffe himself and his dead victims we can be sure that most of the words are totally imagined by Yallop. With



other people we have no way of knowing how much survives from the memories as elicited by reporters, how much Yallop has augmented and coloured the material. In conventional, novelistic manner he interweaves letters apparently written through her adolescence by an eventual non-prostitute victim. Since there is no connected destiny involved, the private chatter of this lively but ordinary girl provokes no deeply tragic feeling, but simply pathos, and at times irritation at its irrelevance. The wider readership of this book may well not realize that many of its scenes must be wholly imaginary; in so far as the embroidery and interpretation are subjective and wrong, the book may overall be harmfully misleading for all its substantial criticism of the police investigation.

John Beattie's much slighter (and more expensive) *The Yorkshire Ripper Story* is also laden with over-written "imaginative reconstruction", though a less debatable nature. "Coolly and professionally they examined the horror that lay at their feet. . . . Hardened detectives all, they looked down with anger and sadness at the pitiful bundle at their feet. . . . Slowly Sir Michael began to describe the indescribable." The writing is sometimes downright careless: Assistant Chief Constable George Otfield cannot have been flattered to learn that "before long his name was to become synonymous with that of the Yorkshire Ripper". The book is padded out with elaborate scene-setting, such as a tipped history of Chapelwren, where in the nineteenth century "with the thrift and

diligence of their race the Jews of Leeds . . . began thriving". Beattie or the *Daily Star* team - is imbued with the values of the pond he swims in, emphasizing the common-law marriage of one victim (marriage-lines failed in shield another), and remarking that "predictably the genuinely concerned members" of action groups to protect women "melted away in time and the whole campaign degenerated into shrill Marxist propaganda tinged with Lesbian Lib". Of course there are some people who find it hard to attribute genuine concern or any sort of human decency to people with Marxist views or to lesbians. Tough as the latter are in Leeds, they are responding to realities.

Neither of these hastily compiled books is authoritative, let alone definitive: their disagreements are sometimes more illuminating than their coincident material, so that at this stage anyone seriously trying to understand the pathological interaction of killer and community had better read both Yallop and Beattie, as well as all the others (at least three to date). When as accurately documented an account as possible appears, it will be of interest to many specialists and, one hopes, on the curriculum at Henton. The Manchester police have learnt one thing: the chances given by that vital £5 note were wasted partly because the victim's body and then her handbag remained undiscovered for so long. Now, on a Sunday morning, you may see a routine foot-patrol straggling over patches of waste ground with a dog. Back, as they so often said, to the bobby on the beat.

## Up before the beaks

By Marise Cremona

MICHAEL KING:  
The Framework of Criminal Justice  
159pp. Croom Helm. £10.95.  
0 7099 0430 4

In the introductory chapter to *The Framework of Criminal Justice*, Michael King argues that the existing methods of analysis of the criminal justice system are inadequate. On the one hand, the traditional approach of the legal text-book, which concentrates on the laws and rules governing the system, virtually ignores the extent to which participants' behaviour actually reflects those rules. On the other hand, those whose attitude to the system is coloured by a particular social theory, attempt to describe the activity of the courts purely in terms of a particular "social function". Within each theory certain characteristics of the system are stressed as reflecting this social function: for example, justice, class domination or rehabilitation. King proposes instead six "process models". In effect six different viewpoints or ideological perspectives, each of which may be adopted either by participants in the system or by sociological observers, and from which the criminal justice system is examined.

The next step in the argument is a description of a particular type of criminal trial. A statement of the formal rules governing the procedure is followed by a somewhat anecdotal account of "several scenes". In the process, such as being held at a police station, and being sentenced. These are then examined from the point of view of each of the "process models". No kind of synthesis is attempted; the exercise is intended to "expand the traditional conceptual framework" of those studying the criminal justice system with the aim of giving a more complete understanding of its complexities.

However the enquiry is limited in its scope to guilty pleas in Magistrates' Courts, and the justification for this is not entirely convincing. It is argued that very few defendants plead "not guilty" in Magistrates' Courts and that contested cases receive a disproportionate amount of attention. Nevertheless, there are several instances where a (surely not inevitably unbalanced) comparison between the two would have proved interesting. The limitation to Magistrates' Courts is more understandable.

able; a similar treatment of Crown Court trial would have made the book unwieldy, though again it gives an air of incompleteness to the analysis in some places.

Within these boundaries, the application of the six "process models" to the procedure leading up to and following a guilty plea is much the most interesting section of the book. The discussion is useful, and gives an impression of the widely differing perspectives from which the system is viewed. They include the Due Process model, with its aim of justice and emphasis on equality between the parties and restraint of arbitrary power. The Crime Control model, on the other hand, places the stress on punishment, emphasizing the importance of a high conviction rate and support for the police.

The analysis throws light on the tensions that result from the attempt to work towards several different, not always compatible, ideals. It is surely true, as is hinted by Michael King, that the diagnostic or treatment aims of the Medical model are not best served by an adversarial system of justice, still apparent in the hearing of a guilty plea.

But the value of the exercise is limited by the fact that the analysis of the theories is not critical. Each of them clearly may provide an explanation for at least some of the characteristics of a criminal trial. However, Michael King acknowledges that "the mere fact that a particular theory may account successfully for some aspects of knowledge does not bring it closer to the truth in an absolute sense". It is in this absence of any consideration of the contested trial. Important questions as to how Magistrates reach decisions on the facts are not examined. The description of the attempts made by the regular participants to reduce open conflict; the acceptance by Magistrates of the police version of events, and the difficulty of challenging this, would have been more effective in the context of a comparison with the requirements of proof and the possibilities for cross-examination in a contested case.

In spite of its limitations, the book would be useful reading for students beginning a study of criminal procedure, or indeed criminal law generally. It offers a view of the criminal justice system that does not rely solely on an account of the formal rules.

## The wearing of the vizard

By Geoffrey Parker

ALAN MACFARLANE with SARAH HARRISON

The Justice and the Mare's Ale  
Law and disorder in seventeenth-century England  
238pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £8.50.  
0 631 12681 3

This slim volume presents an everyday story of Westmorland country folk between 1681 and 1684. A gang of five or six mounted armed men, some wearing "vizards" or masks, and some William Smorhwait, gentlemen, committed a series of crimes - burglary, theft, highway robbery, intimidation, assault, coin-clipping and other "dark and horrible deeds" - to the terror of the subjects of Good King Charles II living in the vicinity of Kendal, Kirby Lonsdale and Penrith. Each of the gang's crimes is narrated in vast detail: the account of the theft in 1680 of £43 and sundry goods from a half-blind gentleman, Robert Robinson, in an isolated house, takes up no less than twelve pages because the deposition of eleven witnesses are printed in full.

This prolifery is not necessarily a bad thing, for the statements made by these and other deponents shed considerable light on the life of seventeenth-century North-countrymen. We find that the leader of the gang, William Smorhwait, although arrested twice by law-enforcement officers, was embroiled on both occasions (like some more recent notorious offenders) entirely by accident - the first time because he happened to ride into a Justice of the Peace on his way to Quarter-Session; the second time because he was in the company of a highwayman when the latter was arrested under a warrant of "hue and cry". Smorhwait, who was hanged in 1684 after trial before the famous Judge Jeffreys, emerges as a colourful, mercenary and rather likeable character. On one occasion he stole "the wine bought for the communion, whilst the churchwardens were asleep. . . . filling the bottles up with washings". Yet at the burglary in 1680 he still alludes to "hold a Bible to Robert Robinson to swear whether he had any more gold or silver than what they had taken from him".

But what does it all mean? Alan Macfarlane's excuse for rescuing the deeds of the Smorhwait gang from near-total obscurity is that they are, in some way, typical: that their careers reveal certain deep truths about the life of northern English country people in the late seventeenth century. Certainly they had imitations. In April 1684, one Henry Holme of Sedburgh got drunk "and called himself by the name William Smorhwait and did ride up and down . . . [saying] no more than take him"; but, as far as the authors know, the Smorhwits and their escapades never became enshrined in a pamphlet or ballad of the time, although their legend has survived in oral tradition. This account depends very heavily on a single source: the local JP, Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal, whose strong and almost sinister face still strikes chill as it gazes out at the reader from page 41, took extensive notes on the trial and preserved the depositions of the witnesses. "It would have been impossible to write this book without Fleming for we would have had no detailed records of what happened." Even with Fleming's manuscripts, there are certain gaps (for example, it is not known precisely where the Smorhwits were hanged) but they are not numerous or significant. The real question remains: how valuable is a single case-study, based largely on a single source?

Many celebrated historians, in their own writings, exhibit no doubts concerning the value of micro-history. To take but two examples first published in English last year: Carlo Cipolla's *Flood, Reason, and Plague: a Tuscan Story of the Seventeenth Century* and Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: the Last Days of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* both use a single source on a particular event to reveal the prevailing public and private attitudes and behaviour patterns in early modern Italy. But historical voyeurism will not work when the key-hole is too small. Readers of Cipolla's brief study emerge knowing next to nothing about the range of remedies and responses available to rural and urban communities confronted by the plague. We only know about Monte Lupo and the 1630 epidemic; and even for that, the documentation is incomplete, so that the texture of village existence is never really brought to life. And Menocchio, the hero of *The Cheese and the Worms*, remains an enigma: was his cosmogony truly unique, or were there innumerable millers, each evolving bizarre explanations of the world in which they lived, scattered throughout northern Italy and even beyond? The author, of course, cannot say.

Is the single case-study by Dr Macfarlane any more representative? He claims to have searched diligently through the northern assize records, thus covering the Border shires of Northumberland and Cumberland as well as Westmorland - for the century following 1650, and finds that "no other set of events attested as much attention as those to be described." So the Smorhwits are not necessarily "abnormal", probably unique. But, even so, they were incompetent: their crimes were spasmodic, their organization lax (sometimes they spent so long thinking that their intended victim on the highway disappeared), their execution inefficient (they relied more on bluster than on actual violence, and their neighbours reacted with offers of arbitration between criminal and victim rather than with either terror or vengeance).

All this is important, because to demonstrate the occasional, exceptional nature of organized violence in early modern England is, in fact, the whole point of this book. Whereas Ginzburg used Menocchio's world-view to prove the existence of an autonomous and continuous peasant culture, Macfarlane argues that the Smorhwait saga indicates that peasant society in England simply did not exist after the thirteenth century, for peasant societies (he believes) have high levels of violence and he cites (in his concluding chapter) three bizarrely chosen examples of what he considers to be the endemic violence characteristic of them: a gang from seventeenth-century China, Brittany and Lancashire in the eighteenth century, and a mafia of a Sicilian village, 1890/1960. All these communities had bandits, and were "peasant societies": the nearest thing to bandits that Westmorland could boast was the Smorhwits, ergo it was not a peasant society. On the last page of the text we read, "The absence of bandits in England is consistent with the fact that, as I have argued elsewhere, from at least the thirteenth century England has not had any peasant society." (The "elsewhere" refers to *The Origins of English Individualism*, a work which sought to explain why English society evolved differently from the rest of the world.)

But, of course, while the "absence of bandits" may be "consistent with" the absence of peasant society, not all peasant societies had them. A series of articles studying crime in early modern Normandy some years ago also failed to find significant organized crime or banditry; yet who argues that the rural population of the *Beauce* were quintessential peasants? Macfarlane considers only three out of the numerous available published studies of banditry: if one looks at them all, it would seem that the peasant societies which could support a high and sustained level of organized crime were normally adjacent to frontiers - either international or interjurisdictional - so that escape from pursuit was always possible. The parts of Spanish *La Mancha*, which bordered on the minor states of the Po valley, the frontier between Valencia and Castile or Catalonia, the politically fragmented triangle of territory between Maastricht, Aachen and Sittard: these were the ideal spawning grounds for bandits.

Now, of course, Westmorland was also a frontier area: Kirby Lonsdale was only sixty miles from the border with Scotland (a fact which is largely ignored in this book, just as Scotland itself is only mentioned once). And

until the union of crowns in 1603 the Anglo-Scottish border had been the scene of considerable organized violence. But, Macfarlane tells us, by the reign of Charles II this was no longer so, and his assertion is based on a survey of the Northern Assize records for the century following 1650. Yet the closer examination of these records in an unpublished doctoral thesis of C.M.F. Ferguson (St Andrews, 1981) does not entirely bear him out. Between 1660 and 1700, only about one-quarter of all surviving indictments for the three northern shires were for larceny - yet students of other parts of England have found 70 per cent to be the norm at this time. Clearly the former Macfarlane was exceptional. Almost a third of all indictments (51 per cent of Westmorland's) were for "heinous non-conformity" - whether Quaker, Presbyterian or Catholic, and a further 26 per cent involved assault, riotous assembly or close-breaking, mainly by people acting in groups. Thus in Northumberland, between 1660 and 1692, although less than 200 persons were indicted for assaults committed alone, over 800 were indicted for assaults committed in groups.

Nor was group violence anything new in Restoration times: previous escapades were still remembered vividly as the Smorhwits donned their vizards. In 1696, for example, in a celebrated case, for Walter Scott of Buccleugh had led eighty clansmen in a successful assault on Carlisle castle (where the Smorhwait brothers were later detained) to release the notorious thief, William Armstrong, known as Kinnmont Willie, who was imprisoned there. Seven years later, in the week following the death of Queen Elizabeth I in March 1603, an orgy of looting and violence broke out which caused the death of six men, the capture and ransom of fourteen more, the destruction of property worth £6,750 and the rustling of 3000 head of cattle. An army was summoned to put an end to what contemporaries euphemistically called "The Busy Week".

The extent of this violence thoroughly alarmed the government so that in 1605 a new institution, known as the Border Commissioners, was created to police the troubled "middle shires" (as James VI and I insisted on calling the border region). Although the commission (which is never mentioned by Macfarlane) lapsed during the 1650s, it was renewed in 1662, and as late as 1675 the English Border commissioners alone tried 140 persons, mostly for violent crimes, and sentenced twelve to death, twenty-six to prison, and twelve more to other corporal penalties. By then, however, the commissioners had begun to feel that their work was superfluous. The next year they felt able to boast: "now at this time are seldom any thiefs committed but subjects may leave out free their horse, kye or sheep in the field", and after 1678 there are no further records for the English commissioners. The JPs and assize judges were thought to be sufficient.

It was at precisely this point, when the "middle shires" were no longer considered a "special case", that the Smorhwait brothers, and their accomplices, began their life of crime. Thus already they were acute discontents: gentlemen no longer led bands to pillage and loot as they had before the Civil War. But everyone could remember the time when they did. The Smorhwits were by no means the atypical offenders that Macfarlane would have us believe, just as the border shires were not static, stable environments from 1200 to 1750 that he portrays. There can be no safe generalization from these events, of these areas, to the rest of the kingdom. And since this supportive role is the book's *raison d'être*, we are left with a charming but isolated chapter in the everyday life of some two dozen seventeenth-century country folk. It is not enough.

Originally published in 1973, the third edition of Michael Zander's *Cases and Materials on the English Legal System* (476pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £17.50. 0 297 778226) has been extensively revised and updated: all material related to law-making, a subject now dealt with separately in Zander's companion volume, *The Law-Making Process*, has been omitted.

## The top line and the sub-text

By Peter Conrad

A Midsummer Night's Dream  
Glyndebourne

Peter Grimes  
Covent Garden

Auden sniffed at Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as "pure Kensington", implying that its exotic setting was a trimmed and tamed suburban park, grazed by faines as winsome as Rackham's. He was wrong about that: Britten's music does elicit the irrationality and sick sorcery of the play, and the community of his wood is as slumberously oppressive as the gossiping small town of his *Peter Grimes*. But the opera is certainly pure Glyndebourne, an exact adjustment of art to the place's atmosphere, and Peter Hall's new production there is a marvel - staged with creepy animism on a silver platform peopled with limber, eurythmic trees; cast to perfection; and conducted by Bernard Haitink with a concern not for pastoral whimsies but for the poisoning entanglement which is the wood's sexual undergrowth.

The initial service of Hall's production is as a reminder of how brilliantly Britten has transposed the play to music. The justification of a Shakespearean opera is its discovery of a musical impulse inside or beneath the words, which is anxious to be let out - in Verdi's *Otello* it's what William Knight later heard as "the *Otello* music", the hero's response to self-celebrating or self-examining songs: with the same composer's *Falstaff*, music redeems the dramatic character's moral frailties, since it attests to the energy and ebullience which course through him and excuse his lapses; and Britten's music records the unarticulated or disembodied fantasies of the Shakespearean characters.

Music is the sleep of the play's reason. The *Dream* flirts at the analogies between imagination and the truant states of sleep, magic, even lunacy. For its human characters, sleep is consolation and restoration, sealing sorrow's eye. For the fairies, it is an associative liberty like Ariel's, licensing their intrusion into consciousness while reason sleeps. For the rustic, it is a rudimentary form of imagination: Bottom could have called his experience a vision, but he chooses to classify it as a dream, which is how Puck in the epilogue offers to define the play itself. The play's theoretical of imagination and of dramatic genre, marshals these various definitions and categorizes imagination as a mental power which derives from mental recusancy. The poet's confederates are the lunatic and the lover, but his art organizes their exuberant frights and frenzies and confers on illusions a corporeal solidity, "a local habitation and a name".

Theseus and Hippolyta, "lovers of the scenes out from the libretto, invoke music as a symbol of concord, confusion, a chaos of sounds which (like the intertwining existences of the play) unravels into a natural harmony. Listening to the horns and bounds echoing in conjunction, they praise "so musical a discord, such sweet thunder". Music has charmed and pacified the affray of the chase, making human order out of the baying of the hounds (as Theseus says) tuneable and obedient. Here is the cue for Britten's opera. The characters of the play, confined to words; fumble to rescue a verbal meaning from their dreams. Bottom is convinced of the eloquence and argumentative purport of unreason: "I have an explication of sleep upon me". But all he can do when he awakes is to confound reason with nonsensical paradoxes ("the eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen . . ."). The lovers remain amazed by the polyphonic in-

terfusion of their minds which has contrived what Theseus calls "this gentle concord" between them.

Where words fail, music takes over. If imagination in the play is reason's sleep, then Britten's music is the sleep of language. His score begins by transcribing the collective unconsciousness of nature - a snore and slither on cellos and basses as the nocturnal earth breathes and Glyndebourne's animated trees rustle. Before eliciting those initial, primal sounds from the orchestra, Bernard Haitink wisely left a long moment of stillness, after the curtain had parted on the grey mark of John Bury wood. Thus, when the first rumblings were eventually heard, they seemed, like the aquatic life-stream welling up inaudibly in *Das Rheingold*, to be silence overheard, the earth eavesdropped on. This subliminal music stirs out of silence and is exhaled, or (in Forster's word, talking about the reverberation after the end of a Beethoven symphony) expands, back into a silence inaccessible to words. Silence and a concomitant oblivion are the beatitudes of pastoral: the innocence of obtuse bliss, the peace of sinking gratefully into a vegetable or mineral state and becoming, like everything else in the landscape, a mere object. This is the secret joy of Snout's impersonation, in the play within the play, of a wall. Like one of Wordsworth's rustics, who seem asleep or dead in their immobility, he has attained the pastoral bliss and silence of insensibility. The courtiers suddenly wonder at hearing a partition discourse, but the secret bequest of music to the play is that it implants a tongue in dumb things, deviates an idiom for inarticulacy.

The music's emergence from a silent sleep means that its first sound is a stertorous growl, followed by a yawn. These subterranean murmurs are the unsettled heavings of the proscribed Id music here, as in Wagner, is a threatening noise from beneath the floor, the dissonance of unconsciousness. Britten's score is that Id with a wordless voice - the oozing malice of the squall which infects the orchestra like the sexual plague advancing through Britten's *Death in Venice*; the barnyard grunts and snarls which erupt beneath the frolics of the rustics; the nervous fever of the music for the lovers. The opera is interested not only in setting words but in their evaporation into sleepy wordless sound, Coloratura, in Titania's petitioning of sleep, uses the voice not for communication or even self-expression but for hypnotism. While the orchestra swoons, she sings offstage, her words a slivery blur. A lullaby like this is both a prescription for sleep and an anticipation of it: the ultimate reason for singing it is, as Auden says, to make us "hear nothing at all". If her voice is a narcotic, the music of the lovers illustrates the voice's human liability to weariness and sleepy weakness. Demetrius, fallen to the ground, bawling sung himself into exhaustion.

The vocal hierarchy extends between two antagonistic elements - the air in which the fairies can render themselves invisible; the earth which sullies the rustics. The singing of the fairies belies their bodies. Oberon is a counter-tenor, Titania, a virginitously high soprano. The rustics on the contrary are gruff because corporeal. The transition from one vocal range to the other duplicates the imagination's feat which is, as Theseus says, an act of incorporation: attuning with a body and an earthy actuality, fantasies as diaphanously non-existent as the fairies are.

Britten is always re-traversing this hierarchy. In the song of the fairies at the beginning, the ascending and descending musical scale is the chain of being, up and down which they commune at will. Hence too Britten's musical equivalent of Shakespeare's

joke about the rivalry between tall Helena and dwarfish Hermia. The contrast between their statures becomes an invidious vocal ranking. Helena is a soprano, while Hermia is demoted to a mezzo, though in taunting Helena her voice oscillates menacingly along the same scale the fairies negotiate so deftly. The subliminal and bathetic downward dives of the orchestra (as in that initial lunging snore) are countered by the variation on the waxes from earth into air (as in Starveling's starved falsetto homage to the moon). Sometimes the voices, abandoning the attempt to utter words, merely recapitulate this movement up and down, in snud out of bodily form - the bruits which hiccup through Bottom's vocal line, or his ecstatic yawn when couched with Titania; the lion's rampaging growl; Thisbe's yodelling trill on "eyes".

With the lovers, music's accomplishment is to change a fustian confusion of identities into an insidious interpretation of them. Magic is a means of psychological trespass for the fairies: the force of the herb allows Oberon to enter and alter the fantasy of Titania. The human beings first experience such psychological mutuality as cosy amity. Helena and Hermia are "two lovely berries, moulded on one stem/So with two seeming bodies, but one heart". But when they begin to compete sexually, the closeness becomes vexatious. Music represents their bewildered attempt to differentiate themselves while only confirming their inseparability, entwining their voices as if fugally in their quarrel. When they awake to find themselves reassorted, the musical structure is a metaphor for reconciliation: the patterned entries and repetitive accords of a canon quartet.

In the course of the opera, music changes from a device for interior intrusion (the twisting rhythms which follow the course of the potion as it deranges Titania) to a means of exorcism, and as such it's summoned by Oberon and Titania to vanquish sleep, just as it had earlier been employed to induce sleep. The music of the earlier scenes is overheard: it's the monologue of the restive earth. The distant horns which awaken the lovers, a residue of Theseus's hunting party (otherwise omitted from the libretto), announce a new definition of music as celebration and officiation. Theseus describes his own conversion from conqueror to wooer as a change in totality ("I will wed thee in another key"), and the interlude of transformation from the wood to his palace enacts that progress from drowsy ambiguity to solemnity and pomp. The opera's notion of its own form is also music. It has previously made provided Britten with a justification for the motiveless and instantaneous infatuations of operatic convention, as in Lysander's spasm of capitulation to Helena. Having vindicated opera and its sexual obsessions, Britten now chooses to "decide it". In the Donizettian parody of the rustic play, music, which had been engaged in self-exploration and in eavesdropping on nature, renounces those romantic and psychological ambitions and offers itself here as entertainment and diversion, knowingly self-rationalized, or, wheo Oberon and Titania return, as blessing not sorcery.

Choosing to cut Theseus and Hippolyta from the beginning and serving them for the final scene, Britten has made his *Midsummer Night's Dream* both a commentary on operatic tradition - in the contrast between its own investigation of the sickness of sexual love in the first two acts and the culinary spectacle with which the bored courtiers are amused in the third - and an satire on the history of musical comedy. In Schenker's monodrama, *Starveling*, a woman enters by moonlight in a forest which is her own demeaned mind; and finds there the body of the man she loved and has probably



Tuneable and cheering: one of more than 800 pictures (another appears on the cover of this issue) illustrating musicians and musical instruments, real and imaginary, comic and serious, of all periods. In *Music: A Pictorial Archive*, Woodcuts and Engravings, selected by Jim Hunter (155pp. Corgi. £3.90 paperback. 0 486 24002 9), to be published later this month.

killed. Britten begins in the same haunted forest of bad dreams, but conducts his characters safely out of its morbid dubiety and back to the indoor shelter of courtly ceremony. "Out of this wood do not desire to go", Titania orders Bottom. But Britten, who flinches from psychological exposure (and prefers to avoid the crises of revelation which opera incites, deciding for instance merely to paraphrase Verdi's announcement of death to Billy Budd with a succession of elegiac chords), wants to be released from the place's spell. When Oberon, Titania and the fairies invade the house after bedtime, they are no longer the shill and malevolent pander of the earlier scenes but have been domesticated, and busy themselves with sweeping the floor and consecrating human nuptials.

In Peter Hall's production, questionably perhaps the forest is the court removed outdoors, with the fairies as impenetrable and Oberon and Titania as Elizabethan grandees, their ruffs and jewels complemented by metallic hair-dos and spiky Mr Spock ears. The lovers, in contrast, are dressed as members of the bourgeoisie, and so, startlingly, are Theseus and Hippolyta. This decision upsets the tense parity there ought to be between those alternative monarchs Oberon, whose nocturnal kingdom is that of reverie and desire, and Theseus, who has power over life and death but not, like his demonic counterpart, over the unconscious mind; who rules a more prosaic territory and legislates classical standards for music and for drama, tolerating poets as diverting lunatics.

The undercaching of Theseus (the unmagisterial Llewellyn Visser) also sabotages this necessary balance. Though Glyndebourne has an excellent quartet of lovers and a fine troop of mechanicals, the performance is dominated by the fairies - the punk Puck of Darnley Nash, no epicurean rebel but a guttersnipe of acrobatic nimbleness; the brooding, blanched, reptilian Oberon of James Bowman; above all the Titania of Diana Corbitt, who in this part abandons her usual philistine and sings with a chillingly unearthly radiance. Her first entry, when her soprano chimps in sudden scabrous

unison with Bowman's counter-tenor, is the most perverse duet in all opera - a vocal equivalent to that gelid, enslaved eroticism which Jan Kott found in the play.

The senses delight and moral peril. If subsiding into sleep, which for Britten constitutes the problem of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is anticipated in his *Peter Grimes*, where the dilemma is the connected one of release into the community and its smug self-congratulating normality. The alien Grimes longs to be reclaimed by the society he affects to despise, but knows it will never admit him to membership. Enraged by his transgression, the chattering citizenry resolves to exterminate him. He finds in the elements the refuge society denies him. He is rooted, he tells Balstrode; not in the community but in the landscape, and is at last benignly swallowed by the sea. The opera's sceptical ambivalence is its suspicion that, despite Grimes's faith in respectability, joining society may be as dangerous as losing yourself in Oberon's wood: Grimes pines for the harbour of domestic peace, yet it will enfeeble him, since its representative is the schoolmaster, Elton Orford, who has enchained the connubial regime of knitting and embroidery. His solitary, sexually outwaded self-will rejects the family, but his courage fails when he sees there's no life outside its protected area.

Like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its uneasy vacillation between the alluring, treacherous wood and the etiquette of the court, *Peter Grimes* develops from unsolvable doubts in Britten. Its intention was to symbolize homecoming. He first read Chabrier during his American exile, and used the poem as a disavowal of the American alienation he'd been required to defend by Auden's libretto for *Pandora*. But the work as composed turns out not to believe in the possibility of this homecoming. Grimes's efforts to belong to his native society are rebuffed and, rather than accomplishing a reconciliation, the opera is constructed as a conflict between his adversary voice and the muted majority of the chorus. When he sings with the chorus and joins in its song at the end, he does so with frightening excess, turning the cheerily ironic duet back into an aggrieved



## commentary

(The top line and the sub-text, continued.)

monologue; or else, during the Sunday service, he adds his voice to the chorus only to jeer at its insipid piety and to exclude himself from its benediction: "God have mercy upon me!" At its most extreme, this vocal contest is a dispute over Grimes's name, which means over his identity — does he belong to himself, or to the reigning society? The work begins with the coronation of him as him; society's denunciation of him as a likely culprit. Near the end, the chorus is mobilized in a deadly, anathematic series of repetitions of that detested name. As if in self-defence, Grimes during his mad scene hubblybubly names himself a dozen times, clutching to the identity the community has declared confictic; but his monologue is punctuated by the cries of the chorus, which hunts him by calling "Grimes!" through the fog.

At Covent Garden, *Peter Grimes* receives a stunning and subversive performance. Colin Davis unit Jon Vickers capitalize on the violence and psychological disturbance latent in the work — so much so that Britten, far from being grateful for interpreters of such energy and intelligence, disapproved of their treatment of it. Davis and Vickers overrule the composer's timid equivocation and retrieve from the opera meanings it attempts to suppress. The Grimes of Peter Pears was an ineffectual dreamer, beseeching the pity of his fellows; the Grimes of Vickers is a bumbled prophet, a patently agent martyr who defies the community rather than imploring its aid. The society in which Britten's hero originally yearned to attain the salvation of anonymity is now — with Davis gauding orchestra and chorus to explosions of homicidal fury — a

lynch mob. Such an interpretation boldly wrests from the work a truth which the composer preferred to believe he hadn't placed there, since it confirms an outburst from which he was seeking to be pardoned (just as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he was seeking escape from the carnal enchantments of the wood).

Vickers appropriates the character, and makes of Grimes's querulous pleas a private creed, maintained with forbidding integrity. With his hunched, pacing gait, his caged menace, his paranoid mistrust of civilization, Vickers has the courage — which Britten, by his own use of the character, admitted that he lacked — to embrace Grimes's alienation and to pride himself on it. "Alone, all alone," declaimed by Vickers with terrifying power, is a boast as much as a lament. Being true to himself requires him to make an enemy of everyone else, and he volunteers gladly, with those crucified gestures he imports from *Parisi*, for the suffering which is the penalty of this isolation. No wonder the composer was disconcerted: the Grimes of Pears was maddened by society's rejection of him, whereas the Grimes of Vickers sees it as his saintly vocation to reject a society which is unworthy of him. Britten hadn't the fortitude to remain in the wood, or to confront the storms which assail Grimes, but Vickers invites the blasts of the tempest and, when Balstrode urges him to shelter indoors, insists that "here will I stay". Just as Hinkink at Glyndebourne makes audible the sexual delirium which is the buried, covert life of Britten's *Dream*, so Vickers ennobles Grimes by investing him with a strength of will which intimidated the composer.

## Between sock and buskin

By Peter Holland

The Twin Rivals  
The Other Place, Stratford

The last scene of Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife* takes place in Sir John Brute's house. In Peter Wood's recent production at the National Theatre the whole scene was moved outdoors; on a stage frothing with clouds of dry ice, actors on roller-skates turned and glided in what was supposedly a frozen landscape of the Thames.

Act 2 of Farquhar's *The Twin Rivals* opens in Hyde Park. In John Caird's production at The Other Place the set is nothing but a wooden cube. The passing of a coach is marked by an actor clicking together two coconuts shells as every one follows the coach's progress over the stage with an attentive stare. As they walk across the stage, the actors duck under imaginary trees and turn into another of the avenues in the park. Lighting produces a mottled, leafy effect on the stage-floor, but nothing else even gestures towards the conventions of stage realism.

The difference between the two scenes is much more than that between lavishness and thrift. In Peter Wood's view of Vanbrugh, the play was submerged in a mass of detail that oscillated uneasily between a gentification towards the emphasis on realism that marked Bill Gaskill's productions of *Farquhar* for the National at the Old Vic, and a self-congratulatory, chocolate-box charm. The result was a glossy spuriousness that won over the audiences at the expense of ignoring the play. There is very little that is spurious in John Caird's production, even in the extraordinary extravagance of the costumes designed by Uitz. Instead there is an honest belief in the virtues of the play and a refusal to overwhelm it in directorial ingenuity.

*The Twin Rivals* is a disturbing and uneasy play. It is not enough to label it as "serious comedy" nor even as "humanism", even though Jonsson is a plain influence. As Farquhar suggests in his preface, there is an area that drama can concern itself with that sits awkwardly between comedy and tragedy. His concern is plainly not only to "ridicule folly", a traditional limitation on many of his contemporaries' approach to comedy; "if there be a middle sort of wickedness, too high for the sock and too low for the buskin, is there any reason that it should go ununsheathed". Though the voices he deals with are potentially tragic, "the persons are here meant for the heroic" so that they "must of necessity drop into comedy".

This carefully controlled translation from one mode to another denies the audience its conventional expectations of comic form and comic business. The frothy posing which we are normally presented with as Restoration comic style is forced to sit with brutality and violence; the posturing is cordoned off into a series of social forms that seem more than usually artificial. When Benjamin Wouldbe, the younger twin, has tricked his way into possession of his dead-father's house and money by pretending that his brother has been killed, we are shown his levity. Caird allows himself a freely inventive scene, without adding any dialogue, to show the parasitic at the rich man's door. The usual outrageous fops are, then, though placed together with real originality from the hints in the text. But all are dressed in the rich white materials that provide most of the aristocratic costumes in the play, and the result is a sterility or deathly pallor that makes the whole scene both comic and macabre. All the Restoration comedy has been drained out of the nightmarish scene. At the centre of the production is

Mike Gwilym's performance as Benjamin Wouldbe. Benjamin is not the carefree rake-hero of earlier comedies, but a vicious hunchback who wants money more than almost anything else, except to triumph over his honest, undeformed brother Hermes. At times, Benjamin is almost endearing; frequently he has the fascination of an Iago or a Richard III; almost always, by abrupt transitions of mood, Farquhar stops us from being sure quite what to make of him. In Gwilym's performance Benjamin lives at the edge of his nerves. Jumpy and twitching, playing with his clothes or his frightful wig, he is continually on the edge of hysteria. The occasional tantrums of foot-stamping rage are juxtaposed with an easy calmness in which he can sit and chat, perched on a corner of one of the set's boxes, a perfect listener, untroubled and opportunely interested in the other's story. Gwilym's hunch is given additional emphasis by his shoes with uneven heel-sizes; he twists and turns, unable to stand straight or still, marching around the stage as he desperately tries to find another way to cheat Hermes.

Benjamin's opening words in the play are an attack on the whole panoply of dressing: "Here is such a plague every morning with buckling shoes, gartering, combing and powdering... Were I an honest brute that rises from his litter, shakes himself and so is dressed I could bear it." But while one of the rake's rakes, mounting similar sentiments, would still have made sure his dress was fastidiously casual, Benjamin never quite fits his clothes, wriggling inside them like an animal that resents the imposition of human habits. A cross between a monkey and performing poodle, Gwilym only once slips into straightforward farce, in his climactic duel with Hermes. Caddishly removing Hermes's spectacles to leave him blinking and stumbling at shadows, he almost wins the duel through purely comic energy. It is dangerously close to an easing of tensions when the play seems least to allow it, but there is a sense in which the conclusion is simply comic timing in the elches of the play rather than providence to save Hermes and oust Benjamin finally.

Paul Shalley's Richmore is a much more conventional villain, trying to marry his nephew off to his own pregnant mistress, the much talked about but never seen Clelia, or slandering at the prospect of buying an opportunity to rape Aurelia. Richmore's villainy seems more dully and yet more threateningly menacing than Benjamin Wouldbe's. His sexual calculation goes way beyond the range normal in Restoration comedy. We are left in no doubt that Aurelia truly was a minute away from being ruined, not least by the cold efficiency with which her lover, Trueman, checks with Richmore that the rape has not actually been successful. Defeated by Trueman and forced to agree to marry Clelia, Richmore is last shown tearing up Clelia's imploring letter, a fine analogue for Farquhar's curious note in his preface, underlining the fundamentalism of the play's dialogue by "admitting" that Richmore never did marry Clelia, "for he was no stoner off the stage but he changed his mind and the poor lady is still in *stark glee*". At moments like these, what seems momentarily like a piece of directorial whimsy is in fact firmly and imaginatively rooted in the complex ironies of the play itself. The play's apparent modernity is Farquhar's doing, not Caird's.

The third villain is Mrs Mandrake, who has "delivered as many women great bellies and helped as many to die as any person in England". Farquhar knew exactly what he was doing when he had Mrs Mandrake played by a man in the first production. This is more than a pantomime device, for Mandrake's inventively lying, her easy rejection of any morality and her every omniscience about the affairs of everyone in town

are both comically grotesque and genuinely malevolent. I wish John Caird had tried casting a man in the role. Minam Karlis is oddly restrained and far too endearing.

Farquhar's other bold stroke in the first production was to have Hermes Wouldbe played by Robert Wilks. Wilks had scored a remarkable triumph as the rake Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *The Constant Couple* three years earlier in 1699. In the long build-up to Hermes's first appearance we are led to expect to find him an attractive and dashing young man like Wildair, honest and virtuous. Instead, Hermes is prissy and dull. His five years of travel round Europe have done nothing to make him less boring. Miles Anderson makes of what is at first sight an unrewarding role a beautifully comic study of the ineffective honest man. Hermes's continual imploring calls on fate, providence and the heavens to help him, his fatuous asides ("Spite of all modesty, a man must own a pleasure in the hearing of his praises") and his misguided belief in his own abilities are carefully added together until he leaves the stage at the end, trying to sum up the play's action into a series of pious and grossly inadequate truisms, talking to Trueman so earnestly that they leave their brides standing.

The characters' energies in *The Twin Rivals* are, then, quite alien to the stock types of the genre. The rake has become an outright villain; the hero is a bore; even the women are less concerned with finding themselves a husband and enjoying the pleasures of the town than with keeping themselves virtuous and safe. It is not surprising in the context of this play, though it would have been extraordinary in a play by Etherege or Wycherley, that Constant's reaction on hearing that Benjamin has designs on her is to place an escape into the country. Nor is it surprising that this should be ironically juxtaposed with the information gossiped about by Constance earlier in the play, that Clelia is going to Leicestershire, ostensibly to visit friends though in fact to have her husband, London has become a dangerous city and Farquhar's next two plays, *The Recruiting Officer*, and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, turn away from it.

Through doubling of parts, Caird makes his London remarkably densely populated. All the cast, even the principals, are transformed into gentry in the park, visitors to the levee, chamberlains and even a decent-sized mob raised by Trueman to save Aurelia. The result is a sense of place that is created without fake realism, a sense of hustle created through inventiveness rather than numbers of extras, and a subtle sense of the interconnections of the various strands of the play through the careful playing of even the smallest roles. There is only one quirky piece of direction. The actors spend some time before the start of the play chatting amongst themselves and with any members of the audience they happen to turn to. Neither the actors nor the audience seem sure of the point of this exercise, which has a specious air of common experimentalism that jars with the tough intellectualism of the rest of the production.

One final word of gratitude. This is a rare production of a Restoration comedy in that it includes both prologue and epilogue. The first, still between the men, and the latter, spoken by the women, work excellently as framing pieces, levelling our participation in the judging of the play's action in a way that involves us far more effectively than the preceding gossiping.

Since *Nicholas Nickleby*, it is easy to equate success with the large-scale enterprise. *The Twin Rivals* gains immeasurably from the scale of The Other Place. I hope that it will not be transferred into a larger theatre, though the RSC has rarely done anything finer.

## Turner and literature

By Lawrence Gowing

Turner and the Sublime  
British Museum

All exhibitions from the Turner Bequest are good. The collection is so rich that however the cake is cut the results are a feast. The interesting question about *Turner and the Sublime*, which has been brought together at the British Museum with contributions from America and a picture from Canada, added to the basis of works from the Bequest, is how far the works and the idea really illuminate each other. The sizeable book by Andrew Wilton, which was reviewed in the *TLS* (January 30) when it was published for the shinings in Toronto and New Haven, appears to be about to address itself to this question, without quite doing so.

The questions of what Turner owed to verbal formulation and what he gains from it are distinct. Art as great as this has a conceptual validity resisting words. The gloss that we are sometimes offered to Goya say, or Friedrich, even by the artist himself, is never altogether illuminating. Was the Englishman any more literary than the rest, in fact? In intention he may have been; that has been regarded as one of the most ludicrous things about him. If his poetic preoccupations are now found to be sympathetic and significant, that is an interesting change in the critical climate. If it is a better climate for Turner, it may be a worse one for Constable, who was one of the great letter-writers of his time (which not even John Gage, his admirable recent editor, will claim for Turner) without a hint of verbiage adhering to his painting.

The old labels were too approximate. Constable was supposed to be too strictly visual a painter for such questions to arise at all. In fact it is Turner who has been rehabilitated as a formalist, without the slightest detriment, if he is understood, to his moral and humane preoccupations. Constable, on the other hand, carried intellectual ad obscurum baggage that we overlook.

Turner's literary ambitions, such as they were, were still-born. Until lately we have found them merely embarrassing and the question of what he gained from poetry has hardly been studied. Where the Sublime is at issue, the question has been examined even less. What did empirical aesthetics in the eighteenth century take from the visual arts and give to them? Burke conceived his *Enquiry* in the household of Oarick, where Hogarth's "Satan, Sin and Death" was hanging, and took his

prime example from the related passages in *Paradise Lost*, yet "in all the pictures I have seen of hell" (and he cannot but have had Hogarth in mind) he seems only to have been left at a loss (which we may admittedly share) "whether the painter did not intend something ludicrous".

The nature of Turner's use of poetry, the mingled dependence on it and ruthlessness with it, is worth study if the elusive, private man is to emerge. For a picture like "Buttermere" Turner printed with the title in 1798 (we are told by Andrew Wilton) "a few verses taken from Thomson's *Spring*". Can Wilton ever have looked at Turner's way with poems and painting? So far from "printing a few verses", Turner in fact extracts five evocative lines of random from twenty lines of highly specific observation, then mutilates them so as to eliminate exactly what is garbure to the descriptiveness that he is supposed to be concerned with. Looking at the picture and his composition nonsense poem, ending "the grand ethereal bow/shoots up immense, and every hue/unfolds" we may wonder. Turner's rainbow unfolds no hues at all. It shines silver and colourless in the sky. This is evidently the question that he is at pains not to open, with his period in place of Thomson's comma, so we never hear that the hues in fact unfold "In fair proportion running from the red/To where the violet fades into the sky". Thomson hurried on to apostrophize "awful Newton" and observe that "the dissolving clouds/Form fronting on the sun, his showery prism/And to the sage-instructed eye, unfold/The various twine of light, by him disclose'd/From the white mingling mazes." Turner himself was not at this date "age-structured", certainly he was far less so than Wright of Derby in 1795, though he was to be later, with a vengeance. He was style-instructed.

Wilton takes the notebook sketch for "Buttermere" as evidence in favour of a naive pre-Romantic view that Turner "painted what he saw". It appears rather that he painted what the schemata of Rembrandt and J. R. Cozens enabled him to see. Turner's peculiar ways with poetry in 1798 are full of evidence of his thought — and perhaps of his instinct too, when his work was sublime in the most traditional sense. "The dormitory and transept of Fountains Abbey — Evening", a watercolour which reads a time of day just as "Buttermere" does the weather, takes five painted lines out of eight from *Summer* and fillets them in exactly the same way. Again, his audience might wonder what it is that "In circle following circle gathers round/To dose the face of things." An angular noun survives as subject. In fact what gathers round for Thomson is the final depth of shadow, followed

through three progressive stages of fading light. Turner eliminated the comprehensive ronal gradations, which were what his architectural style, whether he perceived it or not, still lacked.

The watercolour of "Norham Castle on the Tweed, Summer's morn" is the most curiously significant case. The exhibition includes a preliminary study for the subject, which was to serve Turner's evolving art for more than forty-five years. The quotation announcing the King of Day serves the loss of one phrase, and the addition of a syllable in an attempt to repair the scansion. "The lessening cloud/The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow" in Thomson's *Summer* are "illum'd with fluid gold..." Turner must have known that the fluid gold, which he suppressed in 1798, was then beyond his range. He was prudent to lay it aside, as if for his imagination to work on, because the phrase describes exactly the sublime resource which was to become the essence of his art in late picture like the oil in the Tote.

To do justice to this theme, the exhibition needs not only the early watercolours and the analysis of the poetic prompting which is missing, but also the oil from the Bequest of "Norham Castle". Andrew Wilton's introduction leaves one doubtful whether the Sublime retains any useful meaning. He records one of Turner's Sublimes, the "Mountainous Sublime", marked on a print, and coins many more, perhaps only half seriously. Starting with the Picturesque Sublime — which already blurs the only distinction of general, though not invariable, usefulness at the time — he proceeds to the Historical Sublime, from which we need to be prevented from averting our eyes. It is a surprise to find with it the Wilkie-type genre-pieces, which must be the Ridiculous Sublime if they qualify at all. Then there is the Architectural Sublime, the Perspectival, Piranesian or Incarceration Sublime, giving a hint of the Bondage Sublime beloved of Fussell, and sublime view-painting, "balancing the demands of topography... with the requirements of High Art." (Is that what the sublimity of "some of the greatest of his late paintings" holds down to?) Some of the categories of grand artistic pass in review — sea, lakes, darkness, mountains and so on — followed by the Urban Sublime and, the suburban too. The Industrial Sublime is plain enough, but what are we to make of the sublimity of literariness and the Realistic Sublime?

Through this rambling survey, Wilton turns from time to time to deal a backhand at the connotation which he likes best, unlikely to be on a which was best established in Turner's time. The Burken Sublime, as the antithesis of the Beautiful, the sublimity of "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say whatever is in any sort terrible... Wilton likes to belittle what he calls "the terror" school of sublime theorists, and will have no truck with the "diffidence of a fear that we cannot really feel". He makes haste to applaud the later work on the Swiss lakes, where Turner "could dispense altogether with the trappings of horror... and there is praise for Turner when he 'avoids the merely theatrical'. We are not even spared the Devout Sublime, despite the lack of evidence. Callego Ruskin in support for "the validity of Christianity". Wilton wholeheartedly backs Charles Kingsley's commendation of "the knowledge that the ideal is neither to be invented or abstracted, in which" (among other things) "lies the honest development of the true idea of Protestantism".

It is well for history to acclimatize itself to its subject but it cannot afford to go native in the Victorian establishment. The original vitality of landscape painting was indeed associated in its respective periods with Lutheran Protestantism in the circle of the Elector of Saxony and with evangelical Romanticism, but never eschewed invention as Kingsley wished. Certainly Turner did not; one feels here rather far from the ribald old punster's frame of mind.

As the theme for an exhibition or a critical discussion, "Turner and the Sublime" faces difficulties that might have given pause to the prudent. (I share some responsibility as a Trustee of the British Museum when the decision was taken.) Firstly, however we understand the Sublime, and on a serious historical view whatever is in any sort terrible must be our heart of the meaning, it achieves its summit in Turner's oil paintings, which are outside the print room's range. "We are not moved to terror by print on paper", the commentary pinned up in the exhibition remarks. One can only answer, so much the worse for paper and the Museum that is restricted to it. In the years after 1809 (when Turner gave up using Thomson as his poetic cat's paw) we are undoubtedly moved by print on canvas, and in "The Fall of an Avalanche in The Gisors" it would seem moved to terror. It is enough to notice that, in the presence of oil paint solidly trovelled in the likeness of rock and snow or brushed obliquely and wetly down with the storm, we are moved to belief. The intrinsic reality of the print is so unmistakable that we have to credit the actuality end the human consequence of what is happening — in the studio and on the mountain. When the weather over Waterdale, seen from Farnley (but painted as if from the Chevin, with rocks that still stand) produces "Snow Storm — Honnibal Crossing the Alps", we are in no doubt that in paint and art the whole compound theme has indeed become in some sort terrible; the dilemma of the distinction between the object end the sensation, a favourite of Wilton's, has ceased to exist. Turner liberates the eighteenth century from its philosophical and stylistic coils, which is why we recognize him as modern.

The critical debate is vitiated by the fact that the terminology resists definition. It is certain that the experience of what is formidable in nature, and the spectacle of catastrophe (an engrossment that never gets its due in Wilton's *bien pensant* Anglican Sublime), perhaps by way of the imagery of menace and fear, led to a sense of totality, involvement and envelopment, which is felt wherever the extent is infinite, at sea or on land or simply in light, and recognized as an emotive force. But this is the point, where the relevance of the Sublime is undoubted, that the expressions of oceanic flux are themselves in flux and the received formulations, verbal and pictorial, become no more than incidental. They were surely felt by Turner to be so.

It is surprising that any historian should deal with this issue without so much as mentioning the occasion on which Turner discussed it. It was in 1809, when his thought was turning that way, that he filled a page in the Cockermouth sketchbook which the critic can hardly miss without appearing positively to suppress it: "Speaking of the sublime," Turner wrote,

Tom Peine, who we may reasonably conclude to be destitute of all delicacy of refined taste, yet has conveyed a tolerable definition of the sublime, as it is probably experienced by ordinary or uncultivated minds, and even by acute and judicious without the vigour of imagination, says that the sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime becomes ridiculous and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again.

So much for the validity of Christianity; Turner had read three-quarters of the way through *The Age of Reason* before, deep in the double about Joshua, he came on the sentence which recalled to him passages in his respective periods with Lutheran Protestantism in the circle of the Elector of Saxony and with evangelical Romanticism, but never eschewed invention as Kingsley wished. Certainly Turner did not; one feels here rather far from the ribald old punster's frame of mind.

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## commentary

one of his dumbfounding poems:  
The beard of Hadubras and the hard of  
Gray  
The spinning of the earth round her soft  
axe.

Ample room and verge enough  
So nearly touch the bounds of all we hate.

The passage in the final Discourse, in which Reynolds told Michelangelo as his test for the advice that the imitation of sublimity was always dangerous and sometimes ridiculous (Payne Knight wrote that the ridiculous seemed "all ways to be lying in wait on the extreme verge of the sublime"), had reminded Turner of sentences in the Fourth Discourse on the same theme. Discussing Correggio and Parmigianino, who "signified the gentleness of modern effeminacy" (the Discourses are full of pearls), Reynolds observed that "they often bulge drive on to the very edge of ridicule." [In] "it is the peculiar characteristic of men of genius to be afraid of coldness." It was exactly the fear that would haunt Delacroix, genius of the sublimity of violence). Reynolds proceeded to adapt a quotation from Pope: "Strange graces still, and stranger flights they had." He was amusingly comparing the two mannerists to the Lady in the *Moral Essays* who "was just not ugly, and was just not mad" though he prudently skipped the line, and continued "Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create/As when they touched the brink of all we hate."

Turner did not hate the ridiculous; he emitted the comic expression of Rembrandt long before he realized the relevance of Rembrandt's style to his. The elements in the Sublime that provoked him to something approaching hatred were the schematic, typified by Hogarth's ludicrously

square-cut puritan beard; the melodramatic, represented by "The Bard"; and apparently the cosmic, for which the inaudible rotation of the earth on its axis seems to stand (until someone detects another buried reference).

None of this private communing of Turner with himself and with his reading, his memories and his robust native sense, enters Wilton's discussion; virtually nothing of this informal, literate tenor in the art and thought of the time, which is so relevant to his theme, emerges. Any slice of Turner is richly informing, and Wilton has such a splendid eye and memory for the watercolours that one finds, in every exhibition he does, many things that one is grateful for. I should guess that what he is interested in is the eloquence of the works themselves, rather than the critical debate. He does not seem aware of its ebb and flow in the vital years ending around 1810, and he has no talent for *belles lettres*. It would not excite him, one feels, to realize that he was present at the invention of modern landscape art, which is modern art *tout court*. Instead we have pages aimed at the original American audience - about Mayall, and about the Hudson River School, a notion that is exactly wrong to interpret what was great rather than large about those painters.

Everyone should go to the Print Room and decide afresh on the standing and significance of Turner's work on paper. I am myself deeply fearful of the habit of the widespread exhibiting of these great masterpieces. I have some responsibility for the growth of it since 1966, and inspection does not convince me that the watercolours shown then in New York, and often since, have been wholly unaffected. It

may be that reducing the intensity of light increases the length of time it will take for exhibition to harm a watercolour; I know no evidence that it will eliminate eventual damage and postponing the fate must not reconcile us to it. It may be, as I have written and said, that watercolours should not be regarded as works for exhibition, so much as works for ritual, like chamber music, to be available only at certain hours on certain days; the two media, in the institutionalized forms that we cherish, two public manifestations of private arts, date from exactly the same time, the years of Solomon's concerts in the Hanover Square Rooms. This worry must be faced and set at rest. Quite soon, with the building of the new gallery for the Turner Bequest, it will be necessary to decide where the works on paper in the Bequest are to be lodged. This difficult decision will rest with the trustees, the Trustees of the National Gallery.

I urge them, in particular, to see this exhibition, both to familiarize themselves with the admirable conditions in which these works are kept and shown at the British Museum - nothing less will serve the case - and to consider most seriously the context in which they are in future to be seen. The exhibition convinces me, rather against my will, that this achievement should be placed where it can most readily be seen in relation to the work which completes it and crowns it, the work in oil paint. Turner and the Sublime does an unexpected and unintended service. It demonstrates that neither part of his work yields its full meaning and its real sublimity without the other. Only together is the artist's true stature apparent.



A detail from a page of figure studies by Leonardo da Vinci. The drawing is in an exhibition opening at the Royal Academy on July 11, selected from the Leonardo nature studies in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, and his scientific manuscript the Codex Hammer (formerly the Codex Leicester).

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## 'The Kornilov Affair'

Sir, - Since George Katkov is the author of *Russia 1917: The Kornilov Affair* he may care to comment on Patrick Flaherty's analysis (Letters, July 3) of Kornilov's character and intentions (based, it would seem, on one source only). I am responsible merely for the review (May 15). Mr Flaherty's strictures, in so far as they are directed at me, are three-fold: first, that Dr Katkov and I have made Kornilov into an "avuncular figure", "a Bonnie Prince Charlie" and even "an angel"; second, that my review indulges in "spolitical" a military dictatorship; and third, that my use of historical evidence was "careless" in presenting "without caveat Savinkov's message to Kornilov authorizing a military coup to pre-empt an anticipated Bolshevik uprising". Mr Flaherty thinks I should have stated (whether or not, apparently, such a statement is found in the book reviewed) that a Bolshevik uprising was "very unlikely".

The first point is, unfortunately, too general to answer except by an equally general assertion that none of these epithets corresponds to my idea of Kornilov and I doubt if any of them correspond to Dr Katkov's. Certainly neither his book nor my review of it should convey the impression that they do. I am at a loss to understand the second point since my review does not involve my own attitude to any form of government. Instead, it quotes Lenin's and Trotsky's view that the choice lay between Kornilov's victory and that of the Bolsheviks. Since my own preference is irrelevant, I neither stated it nor implied it.

The "caveat" would have been pointless. My point was not whether Savinkov was justified in authorizing Kornilov to pre-empt a Bolshevik uprising, whether Kornilov's action constituted a mutiny, it is my (and Dr Katkov's) case that it did not constitute a mutiny since, quite irrespective of a Bolshevik uprising's likelihood or otherwise, Kornilov was given a direct order by his Prime Minister (War Minister (Kerensky) and his acting War Minister (Savinkov) to march on Petrograd. To disobey that order would, indeed, have been mutiny which could have developed into a "coup". Whatever my own view regarding the likelihood of a Bolshevik insurrection, it certainly did not seem as unlikely to contemporaries in 1917 as it now does to Mr Flaherty. Therefore, to accuse Kerensky and Savinkov of acting in bad faith in issuing that order is, to my mind, not entirely fair. Kerensky can be accused of bad faith only in acting later as if he had not issued it.

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## The Mandelstam Conference

Sir, - In his account of the Osip Mandelstam Conference at the recent Cambridge Poetry Festival (Commentary, June 19) Henry Gifford refers to the forum on translating Mandelstam. Besides Professor Gifford, the chairmen, and Joseph Brodsky, the panel included David McDuff, Gerard Meares and Peter Russell, all of whom have translated Mandelstam. As Professor Gifford says, the proceedings were dominated by Joseph Brodsky. He then takes himself to task for allowing Brodsky's discourse to be interrupted by members of the audience, for allowing "an experience not unlike overhearing Coleridge to be exchanged for what amounted to a talk-in", concluding that "participation is the cry of the poet". I would like simply to point out in the face of this comment that the event in question was billed as a translation "forum" with contributions from etc. etc. The suggestion surely was that it was a kind of open translation workshop. Had the organizers wished it to be a lecture by Joseph Brodsky on Mandelstam in

general, then presumably they would have indicated this.

As a participant in the Cambridge Poetry Festival who was invited to take part in this forum and who, on declining (since I have not myself translated more than a handful of Mandelstam poems), was urged, as a translator, to make contributions from the floor, I rather resent Professor Gifford's remark that "some of the audience became restive" half-way through Brodsky's "performance". Some rest (at least to me) issues were raised by two or three members of the audience and if "many of the audience felt cheated" - only one protested, as far as I can recall - I would suggest that this was their problem, since what we were supposedly attending was a discussion, not a star turn.

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## Marxism and the Law

Sir, - In his review, "Demythologizing the law" (May 1), Eugene Kamenka distinguishes (among others) two Western views of law, the non-radical or judicial view and the ideological or "radical Western" view. According to the first, law is both internally "coherent" (with its own theory, system, tradition, history) and externally "adherent" (with social ties that link it to the concerns and needs of the community). According to the ideological, "radical Western" view, however, law in English-speaking countries is neither self-sustaining nor intellectually nor reformative socially, but by and large bespeaks and serves the political, economic, society interests of the "ruling class".

Unfortunately, in America these disparate, seemingly incongruous conceptions of law are not always distinguished into mutually exclusive, essentially irreconcilable categories of radical and non-radical thought; and this is so precisely because elected but also appointed government officials, including justices of the Supreme Court, are sensitive to and indeed often in sympathy with the concerns and needs of those who have voted for the presidential incumbent, presumably after finding in his political platform a predilection for their own political, economic, society interests.

Elements of either conception of law, for example, underlie Chief Justice Warren Earl Burger's comments, first in an interview for the *New York Times* (July 4, 1971), later in a speech at Georgetown University (September 17, 1971), on the conservative direction of the "Nixon-Burger" Court or, more exactly, on the relative strengths of Congress and the courts as agencies of social change. Arguing that in a "basic changes" is a legislative and policy process, part of the political process, that the source of social progress lies in "constitutional guarantees" and "specific statutes" passed by Congress, Justice Burger cautioned Americans not to look to the courts for social reform. "The courts have a very limited role in that respect", he declared, "and it consists mainly in applying (not interpreting) the articles of the Constitution and the laws to existing situations not previously brought before the courts". Credit for social change, probably appealing more due to judges, belongs therefore largely to "legislation flowing from the political process", which is, or in 1971, Justice Burger said it was, "a slow, painful, and often clumsy instrument of progress, unless one is content to measure progress in terms of generations and centuries".

Three elements of thought that underlie these comments pertain to either the judicial or the "radical Western" view of law. The first element, which pertains to the judicial view, is internal adherence. There can be little doubt that law for Justice Burger is a distinct discipline with methods, purposes, and resources that other fields, including the political and social sciences, do not share; doubtless, too, law has its own tradition, which

Justice Burger, a strict constructionist, apparently associates, in his comments, with the wording of the Constitution and the statutes. The second element, which also pertains to the judicial view, is external coherence. Justice Burger, of course, fails to establish any clear link between law and sociology; the link, if it exists, remains unexplored and seemingly unknown ("No one really understands what we ought to do with the delinquents and misfits of society", said the Justice at Georgetown University). Yet the underlying, assumptive thought about methods, purposes, tradition, and so on, points to a legal doctrine according to which law should powerfully strengthen its link with individuals like those who in 1971, conformably with their special interests, resisted social change and approved the over-all conservative domestic policies of the presidential incumbent. The third and last element, which alone pertains to the "radical Western" view, is social non-reformism. Clearly, a legal doctrine that asserts the non-interdisciplinary nature of law, that prescribes a strengthening of the link between law and the proprietary, monetary classes and interests of a society does not at the same time envisage law as a principal medium through which social change and progress ought to be allowed to flow.

If my reading of these comments is correct, the following observation will not be out of place. With respect to at least one English-speaking country Eugene Kamenka's division of legal concepts into modes of radical and non-radical thought may be in need of considerable modification. At any rate, in 1971 Justice Burger seems to have assumed between law and social change a relation that contains one or more elements from either the judicial or the "radical Western" view of law. But unlike the proponents of the "radical" view, the Justice appears to have accepted and indirectly defended vigorously the thesis that law has a carefully restricted role to play in the reshaping of even a disturbed, perhaps dangerously unhealthy society. In the wide democratic net lies the great authoritarian fish - still struggling!

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## Steeplechasing

Sir, - Your reviewer J. Mordant Crook (June 19) writes that Thomas M. Disch and Charles Naylor, the authors of *Neighbouring Lives*, "have a nice ear for period dialogue". Example: "Picture galleries, Browning sniffs, 'are an insult to any sensitive mind. Palpitations should be seen ... one by one ... not ranged like so many hurdles in some mental steeplechase'."

This being attributed to a person as well-known as Browning, and to whom, as a poet, simile has special meaning, the reader is faced with the thought that the author's intention is to present Browning as an unacknowledged ass; or it is a case of reviewer and authors being unaware that hurdles have no place in a steeplechase!

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## W. E. Midwinter

Sir, - W. E. Midwinter (1851-1890) was quite certainly not the first Test cricketer to die, as Peter Sutcliffe states in his review of *W. E. Midwinter's W. G. Grace: His Life and Times* (June 26). A quick check reveals that I. Southey and G. G. Coleridge both died in 1890, nearly seven years before Midwinter played his last Test; that H. R. J. Charles died in 1888; and that A. Greenwood and H. Jupp died in 1889. I may have missed one or two more.

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## 'Mao'

Sir, - Lack of space and other editorial reasons unfortunately prevented the TLS from reproducing the references which accompanied all my quotations from Mao Tse-tung's works (March 6). Since Mao Tse-tung's works (June 5) seems to have forgotten many of the things he wrote (we can understand why) it will be my pleasure to provide him (or any interested reader) with these references.

I quoted Mr Terrill: "We are not proponents, but admirers of the Chinese revolution". Actually his original version was: "We are certainly not Maoists. We admire [my emphasis] the Chinese revolution". I fail to see in what way the first statement (even though it is incorrectly worded) substantially differs from the second. Since the reality of Mr Terrill's admiration for the Maoist regime is not in doubt, it seems to me that the main question is not whether this admiration was originally expressed with a noun or with a verb, but whether such an admiration is a sentiment compatible with common sense and common decency. I wish Mr Terrill had addressed himself to this latter issue (which was also the topic of my article). Instead he chose to fill one entire page of the TLS with various observations on the number of weeks he spent in China (seven not six), on the sales figures of his book (25,000 copies - but not a best-seller), on the actual size of his book (83,000 words - not a huge book) and on the diseased state of Ley's psyche (very bitter and frustrated). All these observations may well be accurate; they are hardly interesting, as they can be of concern only to Terrill's publishers, or to Ley's wretched relatives (who have to bear with him every day!).

However, Mr Terrill's letter provided a useful complement to my portrait of the China Expert. He makes two points which are absolutely correct and worth noting: unlike the common layman who learns all about China in one visit of six weeks, the Expert does it in seven weeks; and an Expert's authority, to be valid, should have been vouchsafed by Professor Edward Friedman, Professor Jonathan Spence, Professor J. K. Fairbank and *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*.

The events which Professor Friedman belatedly discovered with shocked amazement in 1980 had been analysed much earlier by a number of leading scholars, such as I. Le Dany (1970), Jürgen Domes (1973), Ivan Jaksic (1973), and Norman Friedman (1977). It is nice to hear about Professor Friedman's "attitude of openness to learning more about these horrors" (Letters, June 12); with such a positive attitude, all he needs now is just to find (at last!) the way to his university's library.

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## A Proustian Rainbow

Sir, - It is unjust of Robert M. Adams to complain (June 12) that Terence Kilmer's rendering of Proust's "ébauches d'arc-en-ciel" as "indisconce" fails to represent the Proustian rainbow. The primary meaning of "indisconce" is, of course, "the quality of displaying colours like those of a rainbow": the word derives from "iris", the rainbow's name in both Latin and Greek.

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## Carlyle

Sir, - Hugh Trevor-Roper correctly says that Carlyle thought Cromwell "had no equivalent in modern politics" (June 26). But for a short period Carlyle seems to have recognized in Peel the potentialities of a heroic leader. According to Froude, after the repeal of the Corn Laws he "discovered Peel to be a real man" and sent him a copy of *Cromwell*. In his accompanying letter of June 18, 1846, Carlyle hoped that the book would have interest for him and perhaps also "have admonition, exhortation, in various ways instruction and encouragement for yet other labours which England, in a voiceless but no less impressive manner, still expects and demands of you". After he formally met Peel for the first time at Bath House on March 27, 1848, he wrote in his journal: "I consider him by far our first public man - which indeed he is saying little - and hope that England in these frightful times may still get some good of him." And in the *Later-Day Pamphlets* he reiterated that hope: with less reservation, since he saw Peel as the only man able to produce "a real

Management, no longer an imaginary one, of our affairs". Shortly afterwards, Carlyle's untimely, accidental death, vividly described in Carlyle's journal, left him with "no definite hope of possible improvement for this country". Jane Carlyle wrote that he mourned over Peel as she had never seen him mourn before.

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## 'The Standing of Psychoanalysis'

Sir, - How pleased B.A. Farrell will be with Anthony Clare's review of his book on *The Standing of Psychoanalysis* (June 26) will perhaps depend on the weight he gives to Clare's reproach that "his lack of familiarity with the clinical situation is a serious handicap to his attempt to understand the true position".

Farrell made a comment in another context which is relevant here. He said of a writer he was criticizing (his "Comment" in *Explorations in the Behavioural Sciences*, eds R. Boerger and F. Cioffi, 1975, Cambridge, p. 501): "When we set out to examine the theory and procedures advocated by a certain figure in the past, the first thing we have to do is to put on the robes of the historian, and consider his work with scholarly detachment and rigour". Farrell's further comment is especially applicable to Dr Clare's review: "His tone is polemical throughout, and he simply does not do justice to various important aspects of Freud's work before he plunges into criticism of it".

Dr Clare aims to persuade that Farrell is wrong on clinical grounds when he "wants psychoanalysis to come out of the exploration reasonably well". I write to indicate that Dr Clare does not speak for all psychiatrists in his belligerent remonstrance.

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## The Private Case

Sir, - The Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Library says that there is no "Private Case" in his department (Letters, June 12). Many readers know that some manuscripts there have been "Reserved from public use". If this is still so, it surely comes to the same thing.

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Eleven British Poets, edited by Michael Schmidt (reviewed in the TLS of March 13), is also published by Methuen in paperback at £3.95.

The World's Great News Photos is published by Columbia Books at £8.95 and not by Crown, as stated in the TLS of May 15.

كتاب في الأصل



## From suburb to suburb

By Jennifer Uglov

JANET FRAME:  
Living in the Maniototo  
240pp. The Women's Press. £3.25.  
0 7043 3867 X

*Living in the Maniototo* is an absorbing and disconcerting novel. The title refers to the dwelling place of a New Zealand writer revered by the heroine — "a high plain, they were told, in Central Otago — you know, where the air is known to be rare, where apricots grow, and there's a scheme to drain the land and the towns . . . didn't it mean a plain of blood after the battles fought there? But wasn't it also a place where patients went to be cured of their sicknesses?" Mavis, the central character, is a writer until the novel's theme appears at first to be the problems of writing, until one realizes that creating a story is simply one of many ways people build up fictions about their lives. Thus Mavis Burnwell, a middle-aged woman who can instantly identify herself to strangers in a bus queue with the resounding phrase "I've buried two husbands you know", is also Violet Pansy Proudlock, ventriloquist, and Alice Thumb, eavesdropper and novelist, "a replica of the imagined, twice removed from the real".

Mavis moves from Blenheim, a peaceful Auckland suburb whose streets all have market names, to its "twin" sister Berkeley, California, where she has been invited to stay in a house while the owners are away in Italy. She is visited there by two couples, Roger and Dana, and Zita and Theo. As she writes in her study, the quartet play out the game of the Great Californian Confession, and reveal to her their childhood fears, their various-

ly formulated aspirations, and their ideal personae: respectively, hero, hannie-maker, refugee, and rescuer. We also see Mavis, on her way from New Zealand to California, staying with another expatriate, Brian, in Baltimore, a Gothic city of poverty and menace. Here, too, people cherish illusion, like the cleaning lady Mrs Tyndall, who waits for phone calls from the radio station and gives her savings to feith healers, or Lennie, Brian's errant nephew from New Zealand, who refuses to see "the real USA" but watches television and steals some silver dollars, symbols of the fictive America.

Some years later, from her home in Taranaki (the author's own home at the time of writing) Mavis pieces together her feelings about these events, turned into poetry and prose in her private writings, "the Manifesto".

The novel is, in part, a saga in which figure after figure is jolted into confronting their "true self". But the book's real concern is with the inexactitude of all our attempts at description and definition, the frustrating, mysterious equivalence between language and its object, between interpreted history and "reality", between original and replica. Parallel to this interest in communication is a preoccupation with response, and this is emphasized in the opening words of the title to each of the book's sections — "Naming" and "Paying Attention . . .".

"Avoiding . . ." Janet Frame involves her readers in these concerns by making the novel itself into a text or demonstration. She uses the "I-beet" form, the mock-autobiography which her heroine specifically objects to on the grounds that it makes too many emotional demands; and within the novel we find "real" people (husbands, friends, children) and characters who are just fictions, of Mavis/Alice/Violet's imagination. All are equally roundly characterized and thus force

the reader to ask: given that the whole novel is a fiction, which people are we to believe in? There is an element of playfulness in *Living in the Maniototo* but the underlying feeling is serious, for it raises important questions about culture and communication.

The deceit of reality is a theme of all Janet Frame's work, the best known example being the evocation of madness, and of the fear which it instils in the sane, in *Faces in the Water* (1961). The direct, emotional tone of that earlier work is replaced here by a densely textured prose which moves unerringly between description and abstraction. Each setting, climate or object is endowed with such solidity that it can join all the "ideal tables" which Mavis associates with Victorian realist novels. Yet although we feel "the shivering ache of being in touch with fiction, a world once vanished and newly imagined", we are always shown the illusion, the ventriloquist's talking stick. The book is almost choked by imagery which deliberately calls attention to this. It employs persistent metaphors of twins, doubles and replicas, and it explores many aspects of language: the magic power of naming; the concentrated force of poetry; the difficulty of learning; the ending "foreignness" of second languages; the panic of less when a stroke affects the speech and creates a chasm between thought and word. The casualties are many: Brian runs a dyslexia clinic, and there are also references to children who suffer the medieval madness of lycanthropy and whose language has been replaced by howls and whimpers.

*Living in the Maniototo* was published in New Zealand in 1979 and won the Fiction Prize in last year's Beek Awards there. In her own country and in America Janet Frame has long been acclaimed as a powerful and original writer. It is frustrating that only two of her ten novels should currently have a British publisher.

The style is concentrated — at times having a density and compression which flies closer to poetry than to prose. Ward Jouve makes much of the colours in her title, epigraph and dual-jacket: skies are "iron-grey", pain "ink-black", sexual frigidity "white and dry as paper", a white snowscape is "soiled by the first moments of dusk". In the earlier stories "Perceps Birth", for example, where one reads of a mother and baby crying ("Cry, both cry, exposed to this grey day into which you've been dragged with forceps") — this perpetual play on the colour grey succeeds. However, Ms Ward Jouve tends to overwork this technique, so that when in a later story a woman's depression is "yet again reflected by the weather" ("The

ene body with the horse". Man and horse here merge into a composite: the otherness of the animal is not considered. Instead the horses share a limited range of stoical human qualities: courage, fidelity and resilience. Ultimately they exemplify the suffering meted out to man by an indifferent universe, and the spirit that can endure and even triumph over that indifference. Only in "Snakeoil's Saga", however, is there any real development of this idea, with the possibility raised in the final line that the Icelandic horse, Snakeoil, might have survived the imposition of a pointless marathon journey across a vast icefield by eating its rider.

In the end one turns back to other books by Cunningham Graham and to the better-known, if still flawed, pieces ("The Gold Fish" or the strangely-omitted "Calvary"). And one is left with the thought that his chief importance may have been the impression he made on other writers. Conrad used him as a model for his Charles Gould, Shaw for his Hector Hushabye; Pound preserved him simply in the first of the *Pisan Cantos* — "himself unmistakably, / on a horse; an ear and the heard's point showing." And one might also ask whether "The Fourth Magus" (from *Hope*), moving as it does to the speculation that "birth and death are not so very different, after all", did not contribute to Eliot's "Journey of the Magi".

up-to-date heroine, finishing her PhD, who, while not exactly a committed feminist, questions the traditional role allotted to her by the charmingly eccentric aunts who have brought her up — and on whose old world estate in Maryland the action unfolds. A certain thinness of storyline is redeemed by the consistently lively writing. The heroine's enthusiasm for fantasy literature provides the excuse for references to Andrew Lang and "Goblin Market" while Conan Doyle's extraordinary book of fake photographs, *The Coming of Fairies*, has made its own special contribution to the plot.

Julia Briggs

## Neither black nor white

By Heather Lawton

NICOLE WARD JOUVE:  
Shades of Grey  
176pp. Virago. £7.95 (paperback £2.95).  
0 86068 228 5

*Shades of Grey*, a collection of seven short stories, was first published in France, and has now been translated into English by the author herself, the writer and academic Nicole Ward Jouve. The central characters are women, mostly married, and the stories show flashes of their very different lives: one is in an English maternity ward, one on a bus heading for Alaska, one hebling (leg in plaster) in a Paris metro, another hire-purchasing twin-beds in a British department store. What they share is the lonely struggle to survive in a bleak world. As the title and epigraph of the book suggest ("I knew neither black nor white; only shades of grey"), the line Ward Jouve draws between happiness and despair is a fine one. Thus a mother's joy at the birth of her child in "Forcible Birth" is briskly dispelled by a military-type matron: "Shattered are the shadows, E's happiness lies in fragments about her bed. Carved up into squares of green and beige like the floor of this ever-crowded room, jangling to the tune of the twitching curtains. . . . Like Jean Rhys, Nicole Ward Jouve can turn the wry comic into the ironically tragic within a sentence.

The style is concentrated — at times having a density and compression which flies closer to poetry than to prose. Ward Jouve makes much of the colours in her title, epigraph and dual-jacket: skies are "iron-grey", pain "ink-black", sexual frigidity "white and dry as paper", a white snowscape is "soiled by the first moments of dusk". In the earlier stories "Perceps Birth", for example, where one reads of a mother and baby crying ("Cry, both cry, exposed to this grey day into which you've been dragged with forceps") — this perpetual play on the colour grey succeeds. However, Ms Ward Jouve tends to overwork this technique, so that when in a later story a woman's depression is "yet again reflected by the weather" ("The

day was grey: rocks could be heard creaking, like gaping holes in the neighbouring oak grove") the image has less impact.

Ward Jouve's writing succeeds best when the symbolism is underplayed. In "The Immaculate Conception" she brilliantly conveys a woman's mental breakdown (it follows a still-born child and four miscarriages) by describing her increasingly manic obsession with order and cleanliness. The woman's need to scrub, scour and wash away every stain and grey spot of dirt reaches a climax when even the visits of the priest (the only person she still has contact with) become unbearable:

His cassock was always dirty, with greasy patches showing on the black, shiny at the elbows from constant rubbing, he spluttered as he spoke, the pores of his jaw sprouted with black stubble. . . . Ashes would drop from his cigarette as he failed to notice the ash-tray, a grey cloud sprayed over his cassock, and he brushed it away with his careless cuff on to the carpet. Well might he speak of God, this dirt spray, this volcano of spittle and ash.

The story conveys emotion and madness by sticking closely to physical detail and objects rather than through trying to get inside its character.

Ms Ward Jouve is less successful when her writing becomes more experimental and abstract, moving as she does in the last two stories, "First Donator: The Wheel" and "Second Donator: The Drawer", towards a stream of consciousness technique. Here the language becomes increasingly frenzied so as to mirror the frenzy of the central character: "Her soul so overflows with unspendable resentment that she strains towards a proposition which in the world of Being does not exist, can only repeat itself again and again, the tap-tap of the cardiac pump, the tic-tac of the alarm clock that's about to ring, Christmas that will be seen be round yet again. . . . And so on, the words fragmenting and the sentence structure breaking down. The experiment is admirable, but the execution a failure.

For the most part, however, the stories work well. It is good to read a volume by a woman about women which can be considered "feminist", but which resists that easy label.

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For the most part, however, the stories work well. It is good to read a volume by a woman about women which can be considered "feminist", but which resists that easy label.

## Ovidian pursuits

By Mark Abley

JAY PARINI:  
The Love Run  
220pp. Hutchinson. £5.95.  
0 316 69065 1

Some writers are born bad, some achieve badness, and some have badness thrust upon them. *The Love Run* is a bad enough novel to raise interesting questions, for its author, Jay Parini, is a poet, editor and critic of some distinction. He also teaches creative writing at Dartmouth College in New England, the setting of this book. Here is his heroine, Malsie Danston, in the grip of a revelation: "The problems that had appeared so maddening earlier in the night receded into the broader prospect of her life as it glowed here and now. She walked on to Bun's fraternity house in a fresh glow of new strength. Abstract, clichéd, clumsy and unimaginative, such prose is typical of *The Love Run*. What has gone wrong, and why?

*The Love Run* has as its epigraph a passage from Book One of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* describing Apollo's pursuit of a frightened Daphne, and much of the novel is an American retelling of that myth. The part of Daphne, young, beautiful and loath-hated, is taken by Malsie Danston, the daughter of a Boston executive, a girl who floats effortlessly through a funny life. Her boyfriend, an ambitious podcaster called Bun, has the physical grace of Apollo, but the

maniacal passion of the god animates an unemployed working-class youth called Teddy Leskovitch who follows Malsie relentlessly, even to the point of kidnapping. Parini is concerned to emphasize, in the hedonistic context of a shining summer, the obsessive force of love, its unreasoning possession of mind and body. Although Teddy's passion is futile, it succeeds in shocking its target into a deeper understanding.

Such a plot could have provided the framework of a compelling tale, but Parini's weaknesses as a storyteller blend with what one assumes to be the demands and expectations of his publisher and his intended audience to create a dismal book. *The Love Run* is regularly irrigated by sex scenes, at which the author shows no great originality, whereas his evocations of the natural world (the source of much of his best poetry) are kept strictly to a minimum. The conversations are inane (these characters say things to each other like "There's no evidence that historical materialism has any basis in reality"), and "I like you because you are a beautiful woman", and Parini is unable to transfer, the occasional intensity of his ideas into the narrative; his need to write "readable" novel produces pages as bland as porridge. Furthermore, the characters are desperately predictable, as if, before the author began to write, he had made a brief list of their physical characteristics and behaviour patterns from which he never looked up. Parini's examination of love rarely rises above the level established by that other retailer of Ivy League romance, Erich Segal.

## Facts, fictions and fact-fictions

By Claude Rawson

CUSHING STROUT:  
The Veracious Imaginellan  
Essays on American History,  
Literature and Biography  
301pp. Middletown, Connecticut:  
Wesleyan University Press. \$22.75.  
0 8195 5048 5

When Mr Haley the slave-trader in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* complacently asserts that the niggers are dying "toable fast . . . what with the 'dimating and one thing and another, they dies so as to keep the market up pretty brisk", he sounds, not for the first time, like Swift's Modest Preceptor on the Irish peer: "they are every day dying, and rotting, by Cold and Famine, and Filth, and Vexation, as fast as can be reasonably expected". Both are convinced that in the commercial disposal of human flesh "humanity" pays better than cruelty: "I'm never newwys cruel" says Mr Haley, and the Proposer likewise shrinks from anything "bordering upon Cruelty". Both men are interested in how best to fatten and maximize the profitability of their product, both talk in similar ways of human beings as prey and as cattle.

The parallels are so frequent that it is hard to believe that Mrs Stowe was not in some half-remembered way translating Swift's pamphlet about the Irish poor into a novel about Negro slaves. She did not altogether admire Swift, though she evidently knew his work, and in a rare and fortuitously apt reference to him in her fiction she likens the story of the elderly here of *A Minister's Wooing*, an abolitionist clergyman who preaches against "trade in the human species", to that of Cadogan (decanus or dean), the autobiographical hero of one of Swift's best-known poems.

Mrs Stowe's ironies about the sale of persons, their treatment as animals or things, to be measured, managed, advertised and sold, have of course a factual source that is stranger than fiction. In these slave-auction advertisements and texts and sets of the slave-trade which she herself documents very fully in the *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a work as long as the novel itself and concerned with the detailed factual validation of a fiction whose "veracity" had been impugned. In other words, the point at which bar novel is most directly rooted in historical fact is also where it most closely resembles an extravagantly "non-realist" satirical fantasy whose surface-truth few readers would ever be likely to think of as inviting any sort of literal credence.

Cushing Strout's *The Veracious Imaginellan* (the title comes from George Eliot) is pervasively concerned with the interactions of fiction and historical fact. It has an essay on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which, today, says nothing about the *Key*, though it does say that Mrs Stowe relied on "documentary accounts" and first-hand knowledge. Strout's special contribution is to relate the novel to a double tradition of American millennialism (to whose bearing on American fiction he devotes three essays), the one apocalyptic, the other "optimistic" with a "rosy glow" partly played identified with the new evangelist preacher Charles G. Finney and his message of instant conversion. He brings out a striking bifurcation in the novel, in whose "pages Negro Christians live in hope. Whites live in fear", an apocalyptic fear peculiarly close to the rhetoric of the "storefront Negro churches in Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*" and Baldwin's own preaching in *The Fire Next Time*.

Strout's essay is a rejoinder to Baldwin's famous attack, "Everybody's Protest Novel". Designed to atone that Baldwin read Mrs Stowe out of her context, "unhistorically", because he didn't know the facts which Strout reveals. The

objective is academically pertinent and honourable, though I imagine hardly likely to impress a victim of actual oppressions. Another "historical" view, that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in its time probably achieved more for the Black man than the writings of any single later activist, is one which doesn't get much attention from either side.

If Strout finds Baldwin's views on "Stowe's sentimentality" understandable but "unhistorical", Mrs Stowe's contemporary Flaubert would probably have understood Baldwin better. He thought *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a failure because its perspective was "moral and religious" rather than "human". In order to play a slave under torture, Flaubert does not need to be told that he's a decent and gedy man who sings hymns and forgives his enemies. The comment is ultimately an aesthetic one, rooted in Flaubert's conviction that if the artist shows reality exactly and dispassionately, the true moral position will become manifest anyway. The aesthete and the activist have more in common here than either has with the historian. But there is a more immediate and often neglected interaction between fiction and history, which the historian might point out. It is that this novel's "sentimentality", that endlessly asserted source of its artistic "failure", was also the source of much of its practical effectiveness. Those contemporaries who loved the book understood this, and claimed that "art" took second place. Flaubert who put "art" first, understood it too. After noting the book's success, he added: "La vérité seule, l'éternel, le Beau pur ne passionne pas les masses. . . ."

Strout's book begins with a section which precedes the above discussion. It consists of three essays, the first written in 1969 for the volume, on problems of narrative in historiography and fiction. He believes with Trilling "that narrative, history, and explanation are bound up together", and agrees to some extent with those historians and others who believe that in order to understand events totally and in depth the historian requires some of the literary powers of the novelist. But he resists some fashionable claims that there is no difference between the two: that all history is fiction, as various theoreticians have held, or that, as Doctorow says, "there's no more fiction or nonfiction now, there's only narrative."

Ideologues of the anti-realist novel may, as Strout says, remind us of the fictive nature of reality, and critical musclemen announce that story-telling is now in the hands of the film-makers while writers "deal with the play of words". But meanwhile, a massive resurgence has been taking place of almost every kind of fact-fiction hybrid: historical and documentary dramas and novels, "novelized" biographies, and "journalism", the nonfiction-novels of Mailer and Capote's *In Cold Blood*, and most recently the fictional nonfiction-novels that some readers have taken Capote's *Handcarved Coffins* to be. This story, purportedly an account of real-life murders in the investigation of which Capote played a quasi-reportorial part, has been challenged in the US not because its "facts" have been disproved but because it exhibits some classic features of the fictional detective story. All this was too late for this book, but the argument that *Handcarved Coffins* could only be a good-story if its facts were true would have been matter for it.

The third section of Strout's book begins with an essay on "The Rediscovery of the Documentary". Authors of fictions have always drawn on pretences of factuality, calling their novels "histories" or, again in the words of Doctorow, who invoked Defoer as a model, "mixing up fact and fiction" in one

way or another. Something which is perhaps more recent, and which depends on or is reinforced by the broadcasting media, is the tendency for "fact" and the process of "investigating" it to turn into a species of documentary drama in its own right. From McCarthy to Watergate, these things have provided a form of politics as theatre, a fictional entertainment similar to any courtroom drama in a B-movie, except that it happens to be true. This in turn presumably influences the manufacture of new B-movie courtroom dramas. More seriously, it provides authors of plays and novels not only with documentary material but with formal models whether for particular local effects or for their very structure. John Hersey's *The Child Brier* is a novel whose form is that of a report of the proceedings of a State Senate investigation. As the title suggests, this work, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, belongs to a tradition of which *A Modest Proposal*, itself a mock-document or statistical report, is one of the prototypes. Hersey's book is not mentioned, but Strout has interesting things to say about Kipphardt's *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, which is based on the real-life Oppenheimer hearings, and also influenced by Brecht's *Galileo*, a modern political play about a historical figure who had to endure "hearings". Elsewhere in the book Strout also discusses *The Crucible*.

This chapter on the documentary also deals, among other works, with Mailer's *Armies of the Night*, rightly perceived as "confessional" rather than "narrative" or "historical", but wrongly dignified by an alleged derivation from St Augustine, "the founder of the form". Mailer's "confessions" belong rather to a style of nudging and hectoring self-exhibition which is probably not much older than the eighteenth century, though the ascription to him of some "metahistorical overblownness" may be more chargeable. His form is something earlier than the graduate schools of the modern academy.

A further chapter in this section deals with the "country" between history and fiction in some recent historical novels, William Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner*, Gore Vidal's *Burr* and Doctorow's *Book of Daniel* (more "hearings"). The argument is that whereas the older novelists, George Eliot or Conrad, sought to historicize the fictional, the new tendency is to fictionalize the historical. This leads to a final chapter for the section, on "The Anthistorical Novel", which is mainly concerned with Doctorow's *Ragtime*.

*Ragtime*, like Haley's *Roots*, offends historians. Gscar Handlin, in *Truth in History*, has recently said harsh things about both, and Strout says both "are open to serious charges of historical distortion and also of copying fictional plots". Doctorow, he denies, the "distortion between fact and fiction" and says "facts are as much of an illusion as anything else". A key episode in *Ragtime* has been shown to derive not from recent American history, but from a novella by Kleist, itself apparently based on a historical incident in medieval Germany. This is only half-convincing: once the fact has been pointed out, one discovers that clues have been planted implicitly. The factual pretensions of *Roots* have been more seriously undermined and it has been accused of more than "copying fictional plots": since Strout and Handlin wrote, it has been successfully sued for outright plagiarism.

"Plagiarism" has acquired some ironic status as a creative act. Pierre Menard, in Borges's story devoted infinite pains to the composition of parts of *Don Quixote*. The version was verbally identical with the original, but "almost infinitely richer" in the task being much more difficult for the later writer



Picasso's "L'italienne", 1953; from an exhibition of his paintings, drawings, linocuts, etchings and lithographs at Waddington Graphics, 31 Cork Street, London W1, until August 29.

"It is not in vain that three hundred years have gone by, filled with exceedingly complex events. Among them, to mention only one, is the *Quixote* itself." (Another Borgesian "author", César Paladín, wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, among other things). Behind the deliberate examples, in Doctorow or in Borges, is an assumption that previous books are "events" (*hechos*) like any others, including those they report or invent. A question mark is called for is a folk-manifestation of it must be, we read, "it is in a book". (Perhaps things need to be only slightly more sophisticated in the global village than in the local one for the obvious view that "it must be fiction, I read it in a book" to take over.)

A more invidious variant, the product of a proliferation of print increasingly difficult to monitor or digest, is the way in which, when a topic is "researched" for some purpose of the classroom or the media, material from direct observation and from both primary and secondary sources will be melted indistinguishably into a single text. (I once read an undergraduate essay which opened with a reference to an earlier chapter of the author's book, and neither I nor anyone else succeeded in finding the original. Subject for a campus clown: ingenious student plants clues of plagiarism where none exists, knowing that conviction is impossible, while entire teaching body grids to a baffling search for source). In everyday life, a student accused of plagiarism will say, not always untruthfully, that he wasn't aware of it, that the passage had got into his "notes" and he had come to think of it as his own. Exactly the same classroom response was ritually enacted outside the classroom in a recent case, when novella B, who had written a book containing a character C who writes a well-known book by transcription, himself admitted the inadvertent use of passages by novelist A (one of which passages, novella A, in turn admitted lifting from a nineteenth-century novelist D). Haley went one better still in classroom terms, when he admitted some plagiarism in *Roots*: he himself had not even read the book in question, but he employed "students" for his research, who fed him with handwritten notes.

Borges's story about Pierre Menard has the form of a plagiarist's confession, including a meticulous bibliography. It informs us that Menard, a contemporary of Wil-

liam James, does not define history as an enquiry into reality but as its origin. Historical truth, for him, is not what has happened: it is what we judge to have happened. Strout might have used this as one of his epigraphs, not only for its matter but because he devotes two essays to William James, one on his philosophy of history, the other (in the book's fourth and final section) an exercise in Eriksonian psycho-history. The question of what the hyper and question marks are called for is a preoccupation: now that the thing is sufficiently established to drop the punctuational figleaves and has acquired a *Journal of Psychohistory* "committed to reducing all history to the psychic story of the effects of child-rearing practices", Strout has some misgivings.

But he values psychoanalysis in principle because it involves telling a history rather than merely inventing one, and "ego psychology" because it has given psychoanalysis "a more historical turn". The last chapters are devoted to the problems of psychohistory, and to some applications of it to fictions and their authors, notably Henry Adams and his *Essays*, and Henry James and "The Jolly Corner".

The book is full of interesting things. It is also a somewhat unattractively assembled collection of essays rather than a coherently argued book. It is often repetitive, returns again and again to the same small handful of texts, and keeps looking over its shoulder at other critics; so that one sometimes feels that nothing gets said except in support or refutation of someone else. But it is in fact a thoughtful and humane celebration of the "veracious imaginellan", and unusually well-informed in both history and literature.

The seventeenth annual volume of *American Literary Scholarship* for 1979 edited by James Woodress has just been published (574pp, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, \$27.75, 0 8223 0455 4). Among the authors who are treated individually are Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Whitman, Dickinson, Twain, Henry James, Pound, Eliot, Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. From the published work it is possible to make comparisons: "The scholarship on Eliot this year is overshadowed by that on Pound. Both in quantity and significance." This has been a good year for Dickinson studies and at least a moderately good one for Whitman scholarship. What *Melville* proved to be the most studied of Henry James's novels.



## The millennial mould

By Richard Harris

ROGER GARSIDE:  
Cumtong Alivel China after Mao  
458pp. André Deutsch. £8.95.  
0 233 97295 1

A spell in Peking on the British Embassy staff from 1968 to 1970 brought home to Roger Garside what damage had been done to Chinese society by Mao Zedong's single-handed initiative in the cultural revolution. Disruption of the economy, destruction of culture, degeneration of private and public morality: this was a China divided, frightened, at war with itself, ruled by a man visibly failing in mind and body.

Garside returned on a second posting in the crucial year 1976. Zhou Enlai died in January. Mao's old but estranged colleague Zhu De followed in July and Mao himself in September, though evidence readily available from foreign visitors in April and May had confirmed Mao's wandering mind and bumbling, incoherent speech. Garside left a very different China at the end of 1979. Some last-minute revisions and additions bring his account of China's new era up to the early months of 1980.

Though he includes a useful chapter on the economy, most of his lively narrative of events follows the demand for political freedom and its hesitant satisfaction during the shift from Hua Guofeng's grasping of power to his being eased out in favour of Deng

Xiaoping and Deng's experienced, rehabilitated old guard. In the period since Garside wrote there have been more setbacks to the cause of freedom. The hopes that enlivened a younger generation in 1979 have been partially extinguished by the restraints now imposed.

This process had actually begun in the spring of 1979 but Garside suggests convincingly that this was tactical on Deng's part. That would be harder to argue of this year's further withdrawal of political freedom hacked by the hollow sound of revived Maoist slogans. The resistance to Deng's pragmatism is evidently stronger than seemed probable two years ago. On balance, nevertheless, the title *Cumtong Alivel* can still stand.

Obviously the new leadership realises that the economy is the most compelling task, since the waste and suffering caused by mending Marxist class struggles have been swept away. The men now returning in high office remember the creditable growth rate of the 1950s, at the end of which they saw their plans struck out by the hand but not feverish race into the great leap forward. The cultural revolution only put the struggle against Man into a starker light. Those men who were disappointed in the 1950s are now back on the notional course. True, the country is in a mess still, thanks to the absurd targets for new investment set by the inexperienced Hua Guofeng in 1977 and 1978. The three years of Deng's "readjustment" have not proved long enough to correct the errors. Like some vast super-tanker, China's bureaucratic millions respond very slowly to a change of course.

Yet the political doubts are not to be thrust aside. The restored party leaders only want to get back to 1956; a younger generation, born and brought up in Mao's China, is ready to look further back, in the whole period of rethinking into which China was thrown by the collapse of the monarchy in 1911. In the company of Peking's foreign correspondents in 1978 and 1979, Garside saw ample evidence of this in his reading at Democracy Wall. Some posters were inspired from on high; most, he thinks, were spontaneous and heartfelt. Among them many were questioning the "new" China into which they had been born.

He recalls the stirring warning from a Chinese student in the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Nigel Wade, after Wade had been lecturing the students on the Press in Britain: "always remember", said the student, "nine billion people and three thousand years of feudalism". The warning is a valid one, however sweeping its assertion or loose its language. The social and political tenets of the Confucian state, a vast, hierarchic pyramid, had ruled China for over a millennium when the Republic was declared in 1912. Against that span of history how firm can the foundations of a new China be—whether of Mao's design or anybody else's? What hopes has the present collective leadership got of imprinting its views on a country that has known one man only at the top of the pyramid through so many past centuries? Can any country compare with China in the widespread literacy of its constant historical references? The past is ever present in the Chinese mind.

If one looks back at the whole period since 1949 the most consistent and unyielding critics of party oppression have been the writers; not all by any means but a talented and courageous minority. Garside knew some of them personally and followed their writings, published or suppressed; he quotes some poems at length to illustrate his theme. The first notable figure to suffer for his opinions (Mao's doing) was Hu Feng in 1955. He is said to have been released from detention but has not yet been rehabilitated publicly. Nor does it seem likely that China under Deng is going to forsake the restraints on writers so determinedly imposed upon them by Mao in his Yenan speech in 1942. Whether harsh or mild, censorship has been recurrent throughout China's Confucian past. Indeed, those impelled by anti-communist opinions in judging China since 1949 are often unaware how far China today owes so much if not more to ingrained habits from the past, on the part of rulers and ruled, as to any newly imported Leninism. Thus Hu Yaobang, Deng's right-hand man in the reorganized party, wore his doctrinal badge at a meeting of the playwrights' association in November, 1979:

A work merely reflecting the daily life of the individual, what meaning has it? It is not altogether true to say that love is an eternal theme of literature. A writer should penetrate deeper into life and come to understand the relations between social classes, the struggle of social development. As Stalin said, a writer is the engineer of man's soul.

One writer present at the meeting later described the air of tension among those present: "In the silence one could smell the gunpowder".

Roger Garside shows good judgement in his narrative of events, rightly starting the final act of Mao's China with Zhou Enlai's last public appearance at the National People's Congress meeting in January, 1975, when he reaffirmed the aims of China's four modernizations to reach fruition by the year 2000. (This was the meeting from which Mao deliberately absented himself.) Garside was an active spectator of the vast demonstration that culminated on April 5, 1976 and observed the manner of its suppression. He has scoured all possible sources for information, notably the journals published in Hongkong that had access to good information from Peking. His earlier chapters suggest much happier relations between Yeh, Deng and Hua's chief backer, Ye Jianying, than is now known to have been the case.

Despite such quarrelling behind the scenes, despite also the ungenerous Maoists dug in to jobs they are unwilling to forsake, Deng's ascendancy is now beyond doubt in the reorganized party. At the very least there can ever again be a return to the blind utopianism that Mao's revolutionary dreaming led him into. But can Zhou Enlai's target of the four modernizations any longer be thought a possibility by any of China's economists? The same doubt, surely, must hang over a communist party that will hang over its doctrine and its mode of government for some decades yet. A millennium is not to be shrugged off, or a "new" China to take shape that easily.

## A Chinaman in Bloomsbury

By Michael Scammell

A fragment of English literary history surfaced at the International PEN Club's conference in Copenhagen recently in the jivier form of Chien Chun Yeh, erstwhile friend of Virginia Woolf's nephew Julian Bell, informant of Auden and Isherwood during their Chinese tour in 1937, and, for a few years during the late 1940s, a familiar figure in Bloomsbury and Cambridge, at which time he wrote short stories and novels in English and contributed to several reviews. Returning to China in 1949, Yeh submerged himself enthusiastically in Mao's new Cultural Revolution from 1966-76, and has now re-emerged as one of the moving spirits behind China's recent cultural opening to the West and a leading light in the new Chinese PEN centre, since his presence in Copenhagen.

Yeh's connection with Bloomsbury dates back to his student days at Winton University and the arrival there, in 1936, of the young Julian Bell in tenth English. Yeh describes himself as "a hard student" in the English department who spent most of his time writing instead of studying, a pastime that immediately attracted the attention of Bell, himself a poet and essayist. What they also had in common was left-wing political views, but whereas Bell came from an upper-middle-class family with strong cultural interests and a comfortable income, Yeh's father, a former teacher, had retired to become a farmer, and Yeh himself had herded cows for part of his childhood in a remote village in the mountains. During the Chinese revolution of 1927, his village had temporarily become a commune and this experience had made a lasting impression on him.

Not long after his arrival in China Bell wrote to John Lehmann, editor of *New Writing*, about his new friend. "I will, if I get a chance, send you some things from one of my students, a really most remarkable young man. He writes, incidentally, in Esperanto, and has just published a book of short stories. He's not got a penny in the world... is now in Japan teaching English—and wants to see life... He himself is utterly charming, and also extremely good looking."

Teaching English in Japan and writing in Esperanto rather than Yeh's deprecating description of himself as "a bad student" — evidence of an irony and a modesty that seem to have endeared him to Englishmen from the beginning. He did not prosper in Japan, however, which was about to go to war with China, and after writing some controversial articles was arrested as a political suspect. By the time Yeh was released and returned to Wuhan, early in 1937, Bell had gone off to take part in the Spanish Civil War — on the Republican side: a few months later, in July 1937, he was killed by a bomb while driving an ambulance.

Yeh, meanwhile, had started to work for the propaganda department of the Chinese United Front, a coalition of left and right formed to resist the Japanese, and it was in this capacity that he met Auden and Isherwood when they went out to collect material for their *Journey to a War*. In the book they describe him as a "shy young man" and mention his friendship with Bell and his stay in Japan. "Yeh himself was in Japan when life war started. The Japanese police arrested him on suspicion that he was an anarchist. 'You must not mind,' he told us, 'if I seem a little stupid sometimes. You see, they struck me very often up on the head.' Like all these amazingly tough Chinese revolutionaries, he gives one the impression of being gentle, nervous and soft." Among the illustrations of the back of the book there is also one of the "extremely good looking" young Chinese writer, labelled simply "Intellectual (C.C. Yeh)".

With connections like these it is not surprising that in 1944 Yeh was selected to come to England to lecture on the glorious achievements of our Chinese allies on the Eastern front and thus help boost the British war effort. On the very day after his arrival, John Lehmann invited him to tea to meet Stephen Spender and a number of other writers. Julian Bell had kept his promise to send translations of Yeh's

stories and several of them had already appeared in *New Writing*.

Almost immediately Yeh was obliged to rush off on a lecture tour of the English provinces, delivering two talks a day on the war against the Japanese. Preferring Mao to Chiang Kai-shek, he was obliged to avoid any reference to politics and concentrated instead on praising the fortitude of the masses. With innately hours and days to while away in provincial boarding-houses and hotels, he began writing again, this time in English, and soon was contributing more stories to *New Writing*, *Life and Letters* and one or two other journals. He was in Edinburgh on August 15, 1945, the day the war against Japan ended, and returned hurriedly to London without waiting to deliver the lecture scheduled for that day.

Now, again, his connections stood him in good stead, for with their help he got a scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he was taken up by members of the Bloomsbury élite — Maynard Keynes, Duncan Grant, Leonard Woolf, the Garnetts. He would spend week-ends with the Bells at Charleston Farm, take tea with E.M. Forster in his rooms and discuss Chinese literature with Basil Willey. And he got to know other writers to whom his political views were perhaps more congenial: J.B. Priestley, who invited him to the Isle of Wight, Kingsley Martin, who began inviting him to his Saturday dinner parties and introduced him to Walter Allen, V.S. Pritchett, Frances Cornforth and Cyril Connolly.

In 1946 the *Sylvan Press* brought out a volume of Yeh's short stories, *The Ignorant and the Forgotten*. In 1947 they issued his first novel, *The Mountain Village*, a romanticized portrait of the village he had grown up in and the revolution of 1927; and a year later came his second, *They Fly South*. All of these were written in English. Straightforward, uncomplicated, lyrical, in a style closer to Jack London and the early Gorky than the self-conscious effusions of Bloomsbury, his tales seem to have captivated readers as much by their avowed setting as by their literary art. Nevertheless, the short stories were made a book Society recommendation, the first novel a "choice", and for the first time in his life Yeh began to make a little money. Margaret Lane and Walter Allen praised his talent, and it looked as though he was set to become an English writer. But his heart (and his subject-matter) was in China, and when the civil war raging there ended with Chiang Kai-shek's collapse in 1949, Yeh hurried back to support the victorious revolution.

About the ensuing years the greying and well-mannered Yeh is now tacitly reticent. It seems that he had not been prepared for the anti-Western xenophobia that overtook China, but there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. He was obliged to keep a low profile, renouncing all ties with his former friends and, tacitly at least, supporting the chorus of denunciation aimed at all the evils of the bourgeoisie West. He was shunted into the relatively safe job of editing *Chinese Literature* in English, and perhaps the best measure of his feelings is that over the next sixteen years he published barely a handful of short stories and no novels at all, sticking instead to innocuous articles and translations.

Then in 1966 came the Cultural Revolution. Yeh's old ties with the West were dragged out and made the pretext for frenzied accusations of "poisoning

the minds" of his readers. He was denounced by his own subordinates, obliged to attend endless "struggle meetings" where he was spat upon, dragged about by the hair and beaten to oblige him to confess, and was demoted to the post of latrine cleaner in the offices of the journal that he had once edited. Periodically he was also dragged off to district meetings where he and other disgraced intellectuals were paraded with placards round their necks proclaiming them "counter-revolutionaries", "enemies of the people", and so on.

These humiliations lasted for what must have been a very long six years, and Yeh's disgrace far ten, but during the last period he was at least left alone after working hours. Still a parish and ostracized, if necessary, by his friends, he turned to writing again and produced a trilogy of novels called *Flames, Freedom and Dawn*, about the historical period immediately preceding the events described in *The Mountain Village*. Under their collective title of *Land*, they came altogether to over 1,800 pages.

While the Cultural Revolution continued, there was no question of publication, but after the death of Mao Chinese political life and culture made another zigzag. Yeh was rehabilitated, his trilogy was published, and he is now writing a sequel to *The Mountain Village* — this time in Chinese.

In Copenhagen, it turned out, Yeh is rather better remembered than here. During vacations from Cambridge, he had been invited by some Danish friends to visit Denmark — "to get away from the rationing". With his facility for languages he had quickly picked up a reading knowledge of Danish, and during his editorship of *Chinese Literature* he translated the complete works of Hans Christian Andersen into Chinese, in sixteen volumes.

In intervals between lunching with Danish luminaries and attending conference sessions Yeh recounted his life story. Despite some of its violent ups and downs, he belays no bitterness, describing the punishments inflicted at the struggle meetings with the same sly humour he used in describing the behaviour of the Japanese police to Isherwood and Auden. He smiles a lot, although as the two Englishmen noted at the time, it is the Chinese custom to mask their emotions with a smile. But he is still gentle and soft in manner and he retains a very real affection for England and the friends of his youth. For him it was so obviously a golden age, and while not concealing for a moment his continuing loyalty to the socialist faith of his youth, he still feels drawn to the country where he published most of his early work.

Yet there is also a cloud. He is aware of a sense of reserve on the part of those of his old friends who still survive, who felt betrayed by his failure to correspond after his return to China and were offended by the lurid anti-Western slogans that all Chinese writers were compelled to support. He does not spell this out — it is his own interpretation of certain hesitations and pauses — but it seems that he feels misunderstood and more than a little sad that his enforced isolation is now compounded by suspicion and mistrust. In my view it would be good for both English and Chinese literature if Yeh were to come back, and to talk not only about his past experiences, but also about Chinese writers today. If invited, I do not think he would refuse.

## Poem

Overstrid, overstrapping,  
Overly, over — whatever you please —  
But break out: stone from ailing,  
Star aloofing the night skies...  
You lost the thing — see your eyes now...  
God only knows what you keep muttering.  
Groping after your pincenez keys.

Vladislav Khodasevich

Translated by Charles Tomlinson and Henry Gifford



Hughty, impassive in her arrogance, an aristocratic old lady strolls in Peking's Woughing Street, her fur-collared cloak a brazen relic from a lost world of fashion. "Survivor of the past" (1957) is included in *Visions of China* (London: Travelling Light, £7.95. 0 906333 14 8), a collection of Marc Riboud's brilliant, revealing photographs of Chinese life taken between 1957 and 1980.

## Truffle country

By Simona Pakenham

JOY LAW:  
Dordogne  
221pp, Macdonald. £8.95.  
0 354 04602 0

Dordogne is an inland department of France on the western slope of the Massif Central. Formed in 1790 from Périgord with parts of Agenais, Limousin and Angoumois, it is crossed by the rivers Lot, Dronne, Auvézère and Vézère as well as by the Dordogne itself. Providing spectacular scenery, it offers, Joy Law writes, "the most wonderful combination of allowing one to live the simple life at its best with the better forms of modern conveniences". This, together with recent low property prices, have made it the third most popular department for foreigners in search of holiday homes, to the extent that, in 1974, among the 4000 inhabitants of Ribérac, 602 of the electricity meters belonged to British residents. Many of these houses are occupied only for two months in summer, their owners joining with the tourists to create the most appalling traffic problems in July and August. The natives like to be referred to as Périgordins not as Dordognais.

For the student of pre-history the region that gave the name Cro-Magnon to upper palaeolithic man has much to offer, though the most famous of the caves, at Lascaux, have had to be closed to preserve the marvellous wall paintings from the disastrous effects of dampness. The megaliths and dolmens may not be so spectacular as those in Brittany, but they gain charm from their setting among woods of walnut, chestnut and oak. There are Roman remains at Périgueux, but the architectural glory of Dordogne is the multiplicity of Romanesque churches and the towered and turreted castles.

As part of Aquitaine its history is closely linked to our own medieval past; of particular fascination are the bastides — 140 "new towns" (the Harbours and Steynges of the thirteenth century) — some built by the French, some by Edward I, to attract workers to open up ground not already under cultivation. As the frontispiece to this book shows, Dordogne still farms lo strips of a kind that disappeared in England under the Enclosure. Each *parcelle* is rented to its tenants under a system called *métayage* and gives an idea how rural England must have looked before the eighteenth century.

The rivers abound in eels, salmon and crayfish, the woods in mushrooms and *cèpes* as well as nuts, but for the gastronomic Dordogne is, par excellence, the home of the mysterious and culturable truffle, so prolific here about the roots of the oak that tranches had to be dug to keep it from invading the vineyards. Geese are still forcibly fed to produce the *paté de foie gras* so deliciously perfumed. The local cuisine has been described as *sans beurré* (sans reproche, for goose-fat largely replaces butter in its dishes).

Joy Law owns a house in the department and has researched every aspect of its life past and present. Her history is required reading for her fellow residents as well as an incentive to even more visitors. Loving descriptions of scenery and of the pleasant way of life still to be found in Dordogne (not the Dordogne, please!) may do the region a service in persuading tourists to choose spring or harvest time instead of crowding in high summer. It is only in the middle chapters with inevitable lists of churches and castles to be visited that the readability of the book falls off — for no author has yet solved the problem of how to make archaic descriptions come alive to those who are not on the spot to compare text with reality.

## Twisters and Red Spears

By Dennis Duncanson

ELIZABETH J. PERRY:  
Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945  
324pp, Stanford University Press. \$25.  
0 8047 1055 4

Sceptical political analysts have from time to time pointed out that Mao Zedong "people's war", for all the Marxists' romanticizing of it in the 1960s as Robin-Hood "freedom fighting", bore a disconcerting resemblance to the vicious banditry that plagued rural China for hundreds of years. Elizabeth J. Perry has now identified a region in the heartland of China in which the matter can be put to the test with some degree of certainty. Huai-pel, lying between the right bank of the Yellow River and the left bank of the Huni River, has been the scene, in the past two centuries, of two major "peasant revolts", of the Nien ("Twisters") and of the Red Spears, as well as of guerrilla activity by the communists before the liberation in 1949. It is a region rich in historical records, and the communists there chronicled fully their own policies and experiences, consequently, a determined researcher into the planning and execution of the communist struggle for power stands a good chance with Huai-pel of getting to the bottom of the perpetual conundrum of how much weight the analyst should attach to what Lenin called "spontaneous reaction" and how much to mobilization willed by the "subjective factor", the Communist Party. Half a dozen Japanese studies of social conditions in this part of China have provided Dr Perry with still more information and a detached perspective.

The evidence is presented simply and dispassionately. Huai-pel has always been poverty-stricken, and past outbreaks of banditry have tended to follow the frequent incidence of drought and flood, especially the periodical changes of channel of the Yellow River. China's sorrow. Administrative

ineptitude, burdensome tax levies for central government purposes, and the depredations by marauding armies at every change of dynasty, all added in imperial times, and to some extent still added in the twenty years of Republican rule between 1911 and the Japanese invasion, to the environmental excuses for the natives to turn brigand and start raiding neighbouring districts which were either temporarily better off or else less able to stand up for themselves. Highway robbery, the smuggling of salt (a state monopoly), and feudism between lineages of different surname over property or "honour" were also liable to elicit the open conflict. Another essential factor was the millennial Chinese practice of female infanticide; one in five of rural males in Huai-pel spent his life as a "bare-ideal" bachelor and was therefore idle — nothing-to-lose-but-his-chains fodder for rebellion.

Central-government reaction invariably took two forms: direct military onslaughts on bandit lairs or encouragement of the age-old propensity of the natives, when threatened by brigands, to organize their own defence. Other authors have brought to light the fact that village militias, financed in part from the *likin* or octroi sanctioned for the purpose by the Manchus in the 1850s, tended to degenerate into swambucklers themselves. Usually the boxers who besieged the foreign legations at Peking in 1900: the Nien were the robbers in this confrontation, the Red Spears the bookishling cops. On both sides, religion and magic were invoked through the launching of new — or revived — sects under gurus (the local term for whom, *fung chi*, was a homonym of the word for "freedom") and the handing-out of amulets that conferred invulnerability: the Red Spears proved their amulets to doubters by firing *vilipiens* (blows) into the body of a man who did stop a bullet in his chest. Dr Perry seems to be the first to describe the "fortified communities" which, on either their own initiative or the government's constituted bases for the seeds and

militias. Here, incidentally, is an answer to those critics of "pacification" in the Vietnam war who used to say that "sweep and destroy" and the organization of peasants in "strategic hamlets" — often dominated by Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, or other sects — showed ignorance of the traditional social structure; in reality such tactics have a very long history in the Chinese world.

Dr Perry debunks the Marxist analysis at two levels. Firstly, she shows that Chinese brigandage had something to do with poverty but little to do with class: there were no rich people; landlords and tenants were invariably in it together, on whichever side, with the rest of

their lineage; and the motives of individuals, were as mixed in Huai-pel as anywhere else in the world. "The contention" (of Western Marxists), she concludes, "that the sectarian was a 'primitive revolutionary' whose actions were 'necessary for a transition to more developed or advanced revolutionary organizations seems, in the case of Huai-pel, at variance with the historical record." Indeed, the tactics of Leninism depend very largely on the mobilization of whatever antagonisms lie to hand. Secondly, she shows that the slow and painstaking establishment of social control over Huai-pel by the Communists, in the face of two

decades of setbacks, entailed a deliberate takeover of brigandage, starting with a central-committee resolution as early as 1926 to subvert the Red Spears and make them "temporary allies". Ironically, the "socialist transformation" may have made use of the old feuds in Huai-pel, but it has not done away with them: two rival communes which fought over water-rights during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s under the banners, one of Liu Shao-chi and the other of Mao Zedong, were descendants of the Bare Jing Society who once upon a time sired the Nien, and of their enemies the Old Cow Society, who sired the Red Spears.

## Retaining face

By Raymond Dawson

HWANG CHUN-MING:  
The Drowning of an Old Cat and Other Stories  
Translated by Howard Goldblatt  
270pp, Indiana University Press.  
\$16.50 (paperback, £5.95).  
0 253 32452 1

While fiction on the Chinese mainland since 1949 has been often concerned with the depiction of revolutionary models and has been busy conforming with Maoist doctrine that "art is to serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers", there has been a much livelier literary scene on Taiwan. These stories by the gifted young writer Hwang Chun-ming deal mainly with the struggle of the underprivileged to preserve their face and dignity amid the changes wrought by the coming of Western ways to the island.

The little story is set in the village of Clear Spring, which is just within reach of noxious urban influences. It tells of the resistance to the conversion of the natural spring of Dragon-eye well into a swimming-pool to serve the recreational needs of fat cats from the city. The resistance is led by old

codgers who generally while away the evening of their lives in the grounds of the local temple, but now flock to the village meeting to deliver their angry protests. The project will be disastrous for geomantic reasons. The haunted, near-nakedness will stir up old Dragon-eye himself. His whole dragon's body will grow restless and there will be unpredictable consequences for the whole community. But in this battle between pristine purity and modern pollution, in this uneven contest between old and new — between the temple and the swimming-pool — the latter is bound to win. The valiant campaign for the protection of rural Taiwan ends in tragedy.

In "The Taste of Apples" an impoverished family at last savours a prospect of security because the breadwinner is run over and badly injured by an American officer who is only too willing to pay handsomely for a clear conscience; and in "The Two Signposts" the sad lot of rural youth torn from the soil and transplanted to an ungenial urban environment is nicely symbolized by the two young men from a remote village in eastern Taiwan who speed south-destroying days painting the breasts of a gigantic mural depicting the most popular starlet of the day. The final story is the aptly titled "Sayonara! Good-bye!", which means "Goodbye" in Japanese

and Chinese. It tells of the embarrassing plight of a young Taiwanese business man, who has to entertain visiting Japanese colleagues by trying on girls for them in his native village. The longest story, "The Gong", tells how a gong-beater becomes redundant because public announcements have been taken over by a pedicab driver with a loudspeaker. He drifts into the gang of down-and-outs who hang about in the shade opposite the coffee shop, waiting to earn a pittance for taking part in funeral processions. (This traditionally degrading occupation was, for example, the final stage in the decline of Lao She's luckless rickshaw boy, Camel Hsiang-tzu.) Here among the dregs of humankind the battle for prestige continues.

In these and other stories, Hwang Chun-ming taps a rich vein of traditional Chinese burlesque as he portrays the struggles of little people to retain their face despite the ordeals that fate has in store for them. He records the posturing, the dignities, the tiny victories and inevitable disasters of the underdog with great tenderness and humanity. But the work transcends the particular and becomes of universal importance because here the underdog is the traditional world trying valiantly to survive against the relentless pressures of modernity.

مكتبة في الأصل



# The commercial order

By Istvan Hont

GEORGE SHELTON:  
Dean Tucker and Eighteenth-Century  
Economic and Political Thought  
289pp. Macmillan. £15.  
0 333 28521 2

Dean Josiah Tucker is well known as an eighteenth-century polemical writer and the naturalization laws on the American war, and against dissent in both its religious and political forms. More importantly, he was also the only writer in eighteenth-century England who attempted to write a general synthesis of the theory of commerce on the ambitious scale of his two Scottish contemporaries, Sir James Steuart and Adam Smith. Warburton, his bishop in Gloucester, deeply offended him by the necronism that he made "trade his religion". Warburton was being not only malicious but impious in his language, for Tucker was not merely a friend of trade or merehants, but Adam Smith. For him commerce "in the large and extensive signification of the word" was the essence of modernity, the creator of our "social relations". "How no the ends of both religion and government to be answered", Tucker asked in one of his commercial sermons, "but by the system of universal commerce"? This new system was the theoretical origin of his projected great work, *The Elements of Commerce*, which in the end never passed beyond the *manuscript* stage of its first instalment. Despite promising beginnings, Tucker never delivered his great synthesis. This failure was perhaps symptomatic and should stand as a reminder that while England might have been the classical case of early capitalism, classical political economy in these isles was not on English but a Scottish theoretical achievement, at least in its eighteenth-century guise.

In the prolegomena to his projected general theory, Tucker quickly grasped the essence of Montesquieu's metaphor of modern monarchy as a planetary system in which the gravity of self-interest is tempered by honour, leading to a situation where, in the classical formulation of *The Spirit of the Laws*, each individual is a public good, while he only thinks of promoting his interest. Tucker generalized Montesquieu's notion of the monarchy into a continuous interplay of self-love and social love in commercial society, "analogous to the centrifugal and centripetal powers in the planetary system". He saw the market as the theatre of these passions, and not as a simple mercantile instrument. "What is a market, but a collection of inhabitants?", wrote Tucker, to the joy of Turgot, who translated the passage into French. Behind the division of labour - for Tucker the epitome of human social organization - stood the motive power of man's artificial needs. The attempt to satisfy these needs created the social bond of the market, while the possibility of their constraint self-multiplication could preserve the equilibrium between persons and interests. Tucker boldly presented this process as a seamless development culminating in the application of modern machinery. The introduction of machinery cut prices and so created for its products a mass market whose size facilitated the extension of "market sociability" to the entire population. From this perspective, Tucker easily dismissed Montesquieu's famous argument about the unemployment effect of the introduction of machinery as a purely temporary process which would be automatically rectified by the emergence of new mass-consumption needs.

But why did this theory run into the sand even when developed by a trusted Whig pamphleteer safe under the umbrella of royal patronage? As Tucker perceived, while the commercial system proper "like a beautiful machine" regulates and adjusts its own motions, the political superstructure or legal framework of commerce was "clumsy, imperfect work, which is always out of order, unless the maker stands by to correct and amend it". This might lead him to talk of the revolution of 1688, of which he was a stout defender, as unfinished. Englishmen, when included, were "still to

hundage", he argued, "not to the Crown indeed, but to the people, and [their] fellow-subjects, and we still want the glorious Revolution in the commercial system which we have happily obtained in the political".

Given this line of "revolutionary" attack, Tucker had no choice but to press into service the language of the Glorious Revolution - the language of rights. Taking as his point of departure a position strongly akin to that of Chapter Five of Locke's *Second Treatise*, namely that "every man hath a right by nature to subsist himself, by his own labour and industry", he argued that a "trade may be said to be free, in which every person may engage as he pleases". The key term in Tucker's argument was "monopoly", since "in a commercial sense, every exclusion from the benefit of trade due in all man by nature rights a monopoly". Monopolies were the remains of "antient, despotical power and Gothic barbarity": a "Gothic baron in the lured interest" was "just the same kind of minister as on exclusive company in the commercial". This to have developed his line of argument as a basis for a reformed framework for state policy would indeed have entailed a "very violent attack upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain" as Adam Smith had realized in writing the *Wealth of Nations*.

To substantiate his attack on both agrarian and commercial monopolies required a historical critique of positive law as the basis of English civil society, but because his system lacked a theoretical framework for the comprehension of property rights, such a critique was beyond Tucker's intellectual powers and, of course, his political competence. After giving up the "great project", he used its early fruits only in partial polemics. Though a radical opponent of monopolies in civil society, he employed his theory of commercial polity in the justification of England's early lead and semi-monopolistic position in world trade. As he observed, against Hume's desperate attempts to create theoretical room for under-developed countries, once a rich nation got a lead over its competitors, it could maintain it practically indefinitely. His "imperialism of free trade" was also behind his forceful polemic in favour of severing the constitutional relationship between England and the American colonies. The needs of commerce would force the colonists back into a relationship with the mother country and the future equilibrium would be defined by their relative commercial, not their political forces.

Similarly, in the first substantial book-length attack on Locke's theory of government in the eighteenth-century, Tucker argued that the danger of keeping the "new-light-meo" of America within the framework of the British Empire was that domestic opposition to the new commercial system would be reinforced by Walpole rather than the "people" who supported the building of the new and "free" commercial society in his own lifetime. An enemy of "republican pedantism" and hypocritical oratorical "neo-Harringtonianism", Tucker

quickly added the Lockians to the list of the defenders of a pre-commercial notion of society. While he accepted the limited use of the language of the voluntarism inherent in the ideology of a social contract endangered any established order, including the commercial, and that its excesses could subvert his own crusade for the freedoms of the market. In his view, the origins of political society were to be explained from the relevant facts of the commercial order, starting from "the advantages arising from the particular genius to abridge labour by means of machines", as he forcefully put it.

Tucker deserves the attention of all serious scholars of eighteenth-century intellectual history, and as an introduction to him, George Shelton's book may serve a useful purpose. The surviving data of Tucker's life are diligently collected here, and thanks to the lengthy - though not always judiciously selected - quotations from

Tucker's own writings which take up a large proportion of the book's 289 pages, the reader gets a good taste of its subject's ideas and style of thinking. A bibliography of Tucker's works would not have come amiss though, indicating those items which are available in reprint.

But as far as interpretation and explanation go, Tucker's fate seems to be sealed. Shelton's book is not an academic work in the modern sense. It contains very little independent analysis; this is the sort of book in which a conjectural genealogy and the appetite of Tucker's house-keeper turned second wife are adequately treated, whereas his interesting theory of feudal government "need not detain us". The title is misleading: Shelton has not succeeded in setting Tucker into the context of eighteenth-century economic and political thought. He ignores modern scholarship on the intellectual history of the period which in the past

decade has gone through a minor revolution; on the other hand, on the work from the 1970s intrudes in his horizon, he quickly reassures us that, so far as Adam Smith is concerned, "for the purposes of this book" he has "adopted the traditional view". As a consequence, Shelton's comparisons between Tucker and Adam Smith remain as amateurish as in earlier works on Tucker. (Incidentally, Smith had the third London edition and not the Glasgow edition of Tucker's *Essay on Trade* in his library).

An intellectually reliable study of Tucker, and one which explains his achievement in the light of the ideas of his contemporaries, is yet to come. It will not be an easy task to write it. It is a fallacy to believe that it is easier to write about minor or neglected authors than about past masters, for any prospective recovery of the former must start precisely from an intimate knowledge of the latter.

## Escaping from the study

By D. D. Raphael

GAVIN ARDLEY:  
The Common Sense Philosophy of James Oswald  
102pp. Aberdeen University Press.  
£11.  
0 08 025717 8

The Scottish philosophy of common sense was popular in its native heath in the eighteenth century and then enjoyed quite a strong following in France during the nineteenth. Modern scholars with relevant knowledge would nearly all say that the one common-sense philosopher who counts is Thomas Reid. His criticisms of Hume are well worth attention and his method of appealing to the uses of language is altogether in the spirit of present-day linguistic philosophy.

There was also James Beattie, whose *Impassioned Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* was much more widely read than the sober, carefully argued works of Reid. The contemporary popularity of Beattie may be gauged from no entry in Fanny Burney's Diary for 1780, recalling a meeting with a fashionable young lady who admitted doubts about an offer as a result of reading Hume. After expressing her shock, Fanny recommended Beattie as an antidote. But serious students of the subject-matter today would join Hume in dismissing Beattie as a "bigotted silly fellow" whose criticisms of Hume can safely be ignored.

A number of scholars would include Dugald Stewart in the common-sense school. He was a worthy man and an effective teacher in his time. However, he had little to say that was original or in any way illuminating, so that he hardly attracts any more attention now than Beattie.

Another name is that of the Reverend James Oswald. To many students of the Scottish Enlightenment he is nothing more than a name and indeed less significant than another bearer of the same name, James Oswald of Dunnikirk, who had some influence on the economic thought of Adam Smith.

Gavin Ardley, who teaches philosophy at the University of Auckland, believes that the conventional rating of James Oswald is all wrong. He regards Reid, Beattie, and Oswald as the principal representatives of the common-sense philosophy. He knows that most scholars, including those who have written about the movement quite recently, treat Oswald as the least of the three. He refers, for example, to the judgment of his fellow New Zealander, S. A. Grave, in an excellent book, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense*, published in 1960; Grave "finds little in Oswald but extravagant claims for common sense, coupled with gross misunderstandings of what the philosophers whom Oswald criticised were trying to achieve". Ardley hopes that his own book will reverse this opinion of Oswald, whom he calls "the most discerning of the Scots trio" and "one of the most gifted moral writers of his age".

But really it is very hard to see why he thinks so. He agrees that Oswald's style is "rambling and repetitive". The examples he gives of Oswald's method of stating a case seem to me to confirm the common judgment that here is a man who simply makes assertions, who does not understand the force or purpose of the arguments put forward by the great philosophers of the age, and who certainly produces nothing effective as an answer to them.

Ardley himself evidently holds to a conception of "the *philosophia perennis*" which goes from Socrates to Kierkegaard (of all people) and which he takes to be exemplified as much in

Oswald as in anyone else. As his frequent references to Kierkegaard testify, this perennial philosophy is existentialist in spirit. And what has that to do with "common sense"? I think Ardley's point is that common sense refuses to divorce philosophy from the ways of thought which men actually follow in real life. Thus Hume, in Ardley's view, should have stuck to his acknowledgment that his attitude to everyday life was far removed from the scepticism engendered in the study. "A little touch, and Hume would have joined Oswald in the Existentialist camp." Likewise Descartes should not have entered upon a method of doubt which he knew was merely theoretical. The nub of Oswald's criticism of these thinkers, and of others such as Locke, Kames, and Adam Smith, is that they confine reason to reasoning and neglect the common sense which is an immediate rational perception of truth.

Both Oswald and his advocate rely too much on assertion of what they take to be obvious, and too little on argument. For example, Ardley tells us that "Oswald's critique of Descartes is more searching than Reid's" but provides little in the way of evidence to justify that opinion. The core of Oswald's criticism, he says, is that "Descartes spurred apprehension and sought comprehension directly". As a result, the self at which Descartes arrived was not a real man but "an artificially contracted fragment, a wraith". In fact, however, Descartes' view of the self is the result of a train of reasoning, not of an attempt to seek "comprehension directly".

Again, on Oswald's criticism of Hume's view of causation, Ardley writes:

It is a nice question, whether Oswald here misses Hume's point, as Kant alleges. It would seem, in spite of Kant, that Oswald has taken Hume's point very well; indeed, better than Kant has done; and observed, what Kant did not observe, that Hume's rejection of rational insight was not genuine, but only an affectation of the study, induced perhaps by a confusion between reasoning and reason. The genuine Hume was the Hume who played backgammon with his friends and forgot his philosophical scruples.

If it is "a nice question" whether Oswald has missed Hume's point, we really need a great deal more than this to convince us that Oswald has taken Hume's point very well; indeed, better than Kant in taking Hume's point. Oswald (like Ardley) thinks that Hume's enterprise was mistaken. That is not to "take Hume's point".

Ardley's book seems to me to confirm rather than to weaken the common judgment that Oswald's work is not philosophy and simply does not understand what Descartes, Hume, and the rest were doing. The approach of these philosophers was misguided; Reid made the claim and produced arguments which deserve serious consideration; Mr. Ardley has not in the least convinced me that this is true of Oswald also.

## The weight of England

By Philip Gardner

JOHN WAIN:  
Poems 1949-1979  
182pp. Macmillan. £9.95.  
0 333 28789 4

Despite publishing five books of verse since *Mixed Feelings* came out thirty years ago, John Wain has never quite consolidated the position as a poet which one might have predicted for the undergraduate founder-editor of *Monodrama*, the new broom presenter of the BBC radio programme *First Reading* in 1953, and the clever "Movement" poet determined not to remain typecast by villanelle and terza rima. In fact, since the publication of *Weep before God* (1961), Wain has stepped into the wings of the British poetic stage: of himself as a writer, he said in his autobiography in 1962 "I don't fit in properly anywhere". In the last twenty years, extracts from the long poems on which he has mostly concentrated have tended to see the light, before book-publication, in journals more peripheral than *Encounter*, the *Spectator* and the *Listener*, in which his reputation as a poet of the 1950s was made. The established status suggested by his election to the Oxford Chair of Poetry in 1973 was deceptive, and it was perhaps in way awareness of this that he told a contemporary interviewer one of the reasons he was pleased: his election might prompt more people to read his own poetry. Whether they did so is hard to prove, but in recent years it seems a safe guess that Wain's name has been associated not with *Feng* (1975), his poetic re-working of the Hamlet story from the viewpoint of Claudius, but with his splendid biography of his hero Samuel Johnson, that earlier pilgrim from Staffordshire to the vicissitudes of literary London.

The present volume (which excludes *Feng*, as still in print) gives Wain the poet an opportunity to emerge from the shadows and demonstrate that he has moved away from the neo-Empsonian ingenuities of early poems like *On Reading Love Poetry in the Dentist's Waiting Room*. He does this partly by revising his earlier work, and presents a selection from his earlier books of poetry, together with a sizeable batch of poems, and a batch of sizeable poems, written in the last ten years. He includes (I am glad to see) the Dentist's Waiting Room poem, but omits other prime 1950s specimens like "Recess for Not Writing Orthodox Nature Poetry" and the tough-

sentimental "Don't let's spoil it all. I thought 'We Were Going to be Such Good Friends': the total effect is to preserve only four of the thirteen terzinas and villanelles from *A Word Carved on a Sill* (1956).

From *Weep before God* - still in my view Wain's best volume - six poems are discarded. The rambling "A Boisterous Poem about Poetry" needs no lament, but I am sorry to miss "Time Was", whose excellently articulated iambic pentameters are a reminder that Auden, as well as Empson and Robert Graves, assisted Wain's technique; and the compassionate "On the Death of a Murderer", which originated out of Edwin Muir's recollections of post-war Prague, could more justly have been shortened than left out. Wain also omits "Poem", the earliest example in his work of a form - joining couplets sometimes with imperfect rhymes - which he often uses well, and for less affecting subjects, in poems he has retained. In this one, his investigation of the possibility that there exists in the suffering world some worst "locus of torment", which only a god can put his finger on, leads to a conclusion wholly appropriate in its dissonance:

To perceive that spirit of suffering in its raging purity  
Is to a god the burden of his divinity  
[...]  
He has no ignorance to hold him separate.  
Everything is known to a god. The gods are desperate.

Wain is equally severe (though this time, I think, to the reader's advantage) in his pruning of *Wildtrack* (1965) and *Letter to Five Artists* (1969). Half the former poem - whose title means a sound track not synchronized to pictures, and here describes a mixed method verbal film about humanity and human history - is left out, including sections relating to superstition and to the "homogenization" of America and Russia between the wars. From the latter book Wain omits the two least good jitters, "Moodadust" and "Junk Sculptures".

A poet who compiles a "new and selected" volume is free to print what he thinks will best represent him. With Wain, however, the personal choice to select rather than collect carries with it a general comment which is so beside the point as to be baffling. "This is not my 'collected poems', he says in his Author's Note; so far so good, but "I don't believe anyone under about sixty-five should start talking in those terms", Auden, Graves, Blunden, Fuller, Wain's predecessors in the Oxford

Chair? Kingsley Amis fifty-seven? T. S. Eliot fifty-seven? One is left feeling irritated at being deprived of the full record of Wain's poetic career, rather than satisfied with the samples he has chosen to offer. Perhaps, at fifty-five, Wain should simply have been craftier: a sequence of variously cut back volumes called *Collected Poems* has never bothered Robert Graves, and Amis's recent *Collected Poems* failed to include twenty-five from his first volume *Bright November*.

"Selected" or "collected" aside, this volume has one feature which to my knowledge makes it unique. Instead of printing its poems in chronological order from earliest to most recent (only Auden tampered with that order, and even he later changed his mind), Wain does the opposite: logically, this volume could have been entitled *Poems 1979-1949*. As if trying to avoid some petrifying historical perspective and demonstrate immediately that he is still producing, Wain devotes the first sixty pages to work from a single year, 1978/79.

There seems nothing in principle against such an arrangement; it would not have done any harm to Yeats. But it does not greatly benefit Wain: the "six major new poems" which first confront the reader might better be called "poems of a certain length". One, an alliterative translation of the Anglo-Saxon *Deor*, would go down well at a reading, and it may well be that the leisurely pace and often reach-me-down language of the others ("cloud-dappled sky", "nightfall soft and dim", an old poet "who made life's grit into pearls") can be explained as the simplifying efforts of a poet who wishes to see light dawn immediately on the faces of an audience. "Enobarbus" is clearly a dramatic monologue, though it is odd to find a poet who rose on the new wave of the 1950s now trying a manner akin to Christopher Fry, who sank beneath it. "Visiting an Old Poet", whose poetry at any rate is admirable, lapses at one point into the kind of arch posturing which characterized C. Day Lewis in parts of *An Italian Year*. "Rise, winged horse Fly, muse/Soar nearer to your subject, give strain for strain/Paeon for paeon". And does calling a sequence of lifting couplets "Poem for Kids" justify the triteness of this summary of Life ("Let us give her a capital letter," as Wain says in "Thinking about Mr. Penso"):

It's one long tale, without a sequel  
And its end and its good are just about equal.

"Horses" is perhaps the best of this group, a return to Wain's roots in a country of "dull-gleaming canals and

little humped bridges", an assertion by a professional man's son of his ultimate kinship with ancestors who (in the words of his autobiography) "must have been among the people who carried the heavy weight of England on their backs". There is considerable eloquence in his equation of carthorses that "lean to the strain of a ton's drag", and down-trodden labourers able only to dream; even if one cannot take with an entirely straight face Wain's vision of his possible reincarnation as "A chestnut, fourteen hands, with all the pride of silk-fringed hoofs and indestructible bones".

More amusing, but still genuinely imaginative, evocations of Wain's origins are two poems about his youth which demonstrate that, in his short poems at least, there has been little diminution in his ability to write freshly and sharply. One is "Song of the Far Places", written in the 1970s, whose sly doggerel rhymes point up the essential likeness of growing-up everywhere: "... though the males were hot-blooded in Brindisi among ferns in Trentham Park they had it just as easy". The other is the Audenque "To Be Continued" (published in *Weep before God*), which concentrates on the "Boys' Own" toughness of adventure heroes who preceded the "unfair octopus" of girls and romance. Nor is there any great stylistic leap from the last line of the early "Riddle for a Christmas Cracker" ("Swiftly as white intuitive pigeons fly") to the modified terza rima which opens the section of "Shorter Poems 1970-1978": "My conflicts die/ Like clouds that shroud into a perfect sky". And the best of the recent shorter poems, "Evening over the Place of Cadmean" (other good ones are "In the Beginning" and "On a Tree Cut in Paper"), successfully avoids the temptation to "wax more eloquent and knowing" which could so easily, Wain felt in the 1950s, overtake those who wrote "orthodox nature poetry". Here, as there, Wain simply loves "this mountain and this bay".

Over again, these gifts: the high bareness of the spear-grass, the sheep carved in stone  
and on at sea,  
the day's sun in his lead coffin.

"Cameo", the earliest poem here, and a good enough one for any other poet to have begun his volume with, caps its brief description of lovers with a terse "no more is worth saying". In the 1960s, however, having remarked of his novels "I lack the power of sustaining large structures", Wain inclined towards his fatal Cleopatra, the

long poem. Even the celebrated "A Song about Major Eartherly" whose heart, like that of so much of Wain's work, is in the night place, embroiders its stark and memorable pentameters ("The wise men passed. The clever man appeared.") with missing generalizations in a laxer metre ("To take the life of an enemy is to help him, a little, towards destroying your own"). There are impressive passages in both an entirely straight face Wain's vision of his possible reincarnation as "A chestnut, fourteen hands, with all the pride of silk-fringed hoofs and indestructible bones".

In 1962, Wain spoke of his state of mind when writing, and against the odds completing, his novel *Living in the Present*. From the experience he had learned that "given half a chance, I could produce some kind of work simply by perseverance". If, with A.E. Housman, one believes that "poetry is either easy or impossible", Wain's words have an ominous ring, and go some way to explain why much of this volume has the virtues of rhetoric rather than poetry. Concerned with the communication both of humane values and of an imaginative response to experience, Wain sometimes errs on the side of too much clarity: over-insistent, he button-holes the reader or audience in the hall, he grasps ambitiously for a wide screen that blurs at the edges. What he can do when he forgets them is apparent in many of this volume's short lyric poems, most particularly "This Above All is Precious and Remarkable", which records with simple and penetrating truth his perception of life as a pattern made out of accidents. "More, more, more, always, let there be more!", Wain cries to life at the end of his recent poem "My Name". By all means, so long as he sticks to the bardic identity he elects for that poem: not a shiny horse, however admirable, but a flying-fish.

But this is to cavil at a real treasure house, reminding us of the breadth and richness of poetry written by Englishmen (and a few Scots, Irishmen, Welshmen, and Americans as well). The book is a pleasing object, well bound and handsomely printed, which is important, since it will be around for a long time in the normal course of events. But anthems on whoever decided to do away with a table of contents, which is more important in this kind of book than in almost any other. As it is, it is the usefulness and pleasure in rummaging through the contents in anticipation is gone. If space was at a premium, thirteen pages of Thomas Hood could have been shortened considerably without spoiling the balance of the selections.

*Mira Loy* by Virginia M. Koussis (148pp. Louisiana State University Press. £9.60. 0 8071 0672 0) is a study of the British-born Modernist painter and poet who died in 1966. Two author characterizes her "exceptional beauty, cerebral disposition and cosmopolitan background" and catalogues her notable friends and contemporaries, who included James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound. The book reprints many of her poems in English and French faithfully reproducing her typographical experiments.

## Traditional treasures

By Robert Bernard Martin

JOHN WAIN (Editor):  
Everyman's Book of English Verse  
672pp. Dani. £8.95.  
0 460 64369 2

This fine anthology everywhere betrays the presence of a poet who is also a critic. He has described himself as having conventional taste in literature, so that if generations have admired a poet, it is probable that John Wain will do too. His admiration is generous, and he does not feel he has to disavow one poet because he happens also to love the works of a totally different sort of writer. Least of all does he seem to seek out works that are particularly like his own.

There is something inherently graceless in carping at a man's selection of poems, just as it would be impertinent to comment upon his choice of wife: one is hardly more personal than the other. For that reason it is a relief to report that there are few poems in this long book that probably should not have been included. One of my own tests of an anthology is the erotic verse: since whatever an anthology may be, it is not for every man. Probably the only thoroughly satisfactory anthology would be compiled by each reader for his own pleasure, including all the poetry he holds dear, plus a few dozen

bawdy, whether it be the expected lyrics of Doopce, Cotton, and Rochester, or delightfully witty and dirty-minded Anon.

What the editor claims as the chief innovations in the book are the translations of Anglo-Saxon verse and the large number of excerpts from long works. In fact, there are only some half-dozen translations of *Deor*, *The Seafarer*, and *Other*; Anglo-Saxon poems (no *Beowulf*), but they are excellent, and they do extend the scope of the anthology to make it clear that English poetry did not begin with Langland and Chaucer, as Wain says other anthologies imply.

The excerpts are less convincing, particularly those from Shakespeare's plays, which have been chosen without any apparently good reason, since they are sections of scenes, torn bleeding from their setting. It is true, as Wain has argued elsewhere, that we all return to favourite passages to long works, but in such a case we know the context; without it, the reader is lost. On the other hand readers who have the context firmly in mind will hardly be interested in these snippets.

The publishers' ome for these anthologies is spectacularly unsuitable; since whatever an anthology may be, it is not for every man. Probably the only thoroughly satisfactory anthology would be compiled by each reader for his own pleasure, including all the poetry he holds dear, plus a few dozen

surprises thrown in by someone he trusts. It could then double as a reference book and a pleasure for quiet reading. Wain includes many of the old favourites that one turns to automatically, almost as if checking the text, on the assumption that no collection can be complete without them. And there are plenty of delights previously unknown, at least to me. It is an appealing anthology, and minor doubts one may feel on a few points are to be taken as personal beliefs about how it might have been even better.

It is probably tempting to throw out a lot of the poems we all learned at school. In order to show that the standard poets are considerably more varied than we suspected. Occasionally Wain seems to have yielded to temptation; in the Browning section, for example, the only poems included are "Two in the Campagna", "Caliban upon Setebos", and "Instans Tyrannus" such an eccentric representation for either old friends of Browning or new acquaintances.

Anthologies are naturally on the side of the small battalions, the lyrics and short poems, and make difficulties, when a poet's best works happen to be longer than, say, 200 lines. If the entire poem is printed, it will be at the expense of other works by other poets; that may be better poems. The amount of space Wain allows to individual writers is not necessarily his measure of their worth, but comparative figures

give some curious results. Christina Rossetti is admittedly a great poet whose works are in constant danger of being neglected, but it is difficult to believe that calling attention to her deserves almost as much room as Hardy, Hopkins, Swinburne, Meredith, and D.G. Rossetti have together. No amount of Donne's poetry is too much for me, but is he worth as many pages as the total occupied by Blake, Keats, and Yeats? Crashaw has some eight pages to himself, as many as Sidney, Greville, Lyly, Wyatt, and George Herbert share. Is Ben Jonson twice as important as Wilfred Owen or Edward Thomas and worth four of Stevie Smith? Ebenezer Elliott is made to seem more important than Lovelace, Rochester, or Collins ("Ebenezer Who? you may well ask. He was the Yarn-dweller Rhymers, and much better than I remember from reading him as an undergraduate, but he probably has no adequate space in such competition).

Perhaps John Wain did not have time to re-read the poems before writing the preface, for the Tyrian trader who undoes his corded bales on an Atlantic beach in Spain before an audience of dark Iberians at the end of "The Scholar-Gipsy" is here described as "Syrian", and it is the inopportune coast of Britain where he is said to "untie his bundles" as if he were an itinerant rug-seller parking his wares in a group of shy Spanish waiters in Brighton.

## Climbing to Jerusalem

(For Moshe and Zlora Dör)

The locomotive, a short satisfied steers horse, scoots the plain after which five carriages jangle. At the mountain's foot, with anemones that spit blood, glimmering orange fruits like money, tumble. A stuttering olive pierces will o' the wren, being adored as if a woman of a hundred.

The denser patches of monomaniacal the higher you thread, — you abandon us. We drew energy as Jerusalem hushes its anemone the herdsman, his shadow fractured with sheep. Pure absence mingles the plain.

their celestial wounding, where the stream moils between trees slender as astonishment, their long limbs

draped with fingers. Amongst glimmering wheels of foot the sacred entice fire with the world.

Jon Silkin



## Waterhouse's cathedral

By Wilfrid Blunt

WILLIAM T. STEARN:  
The Natural History Museum at South Kensington  
414pp. Heinemann. £15.  
0 434 73600 7

This scholarly and erudite work is a triumph of achievement: a worthy tribute on the occasion of the centenary of the opening of Waterhouse's "Temple of Nature", built to house the collections of the British Museum (Natural History), as it is still officially called. To the public it is "The Natural History Museum", and William T. Stearn devotes, *passim*, some two thousand words to a discussion of its name.

The origins of the natural history collection long predate the building which now houses it. In the first part of his book Professor Stearn describes "The Bloomsbury Years: 1753-1880", when Sir Hans Slingsby "knick knacker" (as Thomas Hume dubbed it) was still physically attached to the collections now known as the British Museum. Even after the transference to South Kensington, the umbilical cord was never to be wholly severed.

The erection of the present building was a part of Prince Albert's great project to convert a large area of South Kensington into an "Albertopolis": a vast museum complex worthy of the metropolis of the British Empire. Stearn discusses in detail Waterhouse's fantastic "cathedral", which, thanks to a recent facelift, we can now see again in all the pristine beauty of its past

shades. This account is followed by the history of the development of the collection, down to the Second World War and its aftermath (1949). Then comes a detailed appraisal of the growth of the museum's various departments — those of zoology, entomology, palaeontology (formerly geology), mineralogy and botany, and of its library services. These 170 pages, important though they undoubtedly are, are perhaps the most taxing to the non-specialist reader. The fifth and final part, written jointly by A. P. Coleman and H. W. Ball, is devoted to the progress made over the past thirty years, and the "new look" which has been given — not invariably to the best taste — to make the exhibits more palatable.

I imagine that few people would challenge the assertion that Professor Stearn is the most distinguished living British scholar in the field of natural history. His learning is both deep and wide, and he also possesses a quality not always associated with scientists: a lively sense of humour. If he has a fault, it is that since he knows so much he cannot resist passing on to his readers more than some of them may either desire or deserve. The Natural History Museum has about fifty million specimens; Stearn seems to have about an equal number of facts at his fingertips, and he is eager to share almost all of them with us. Yet how perfect is the compact verdict on the achievement of Francis Walker, author of sixty-eight little volumes dealing with insects, "whose catalogues impress the uninitiated by their volume and appal the initiated by their content." The book runs to over four hundred pages; but I am informed that because of the cost of publishing today its author was obliged to cut some 70,000 words — the length of a fairly substantial novel — from his

original script. In one way I regret this, and I hope that the full text will be found and preserved in the museum's library. But, personally, I would also welcome a much abridged version for the general reader.

The eighty-eight half-tone illustrations are, perhaps, rather weighted in favour of photographs of some of the distinguished men associated ever with the museum, though I would not wish to forgo the head of Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, described in the aptly named magazine, the *Candid Friend*, as "shaped like a benevolent biscuit-tin". But there are also many valuable and often entertaining line illustrations in the text, which leave the whole and are admirably chosen. To take but one example, E. H. Shepard's drawing of two children in *Punch* (April 10, 1929), captioned:

He. "Where do animals go when they die?"

She. "All good animals go to heaven, but the bad ones go to the Natural History Museum."

I can add the name of only one benefactor of the museum who gets no mention in Stearn's book: that of Norman Douglas, who presented the institution with many specimens including the skull and skin of a Finnish freshwater seal, "received with effusive thanks by Dr Albert Günther". Douglas's visits ended abruptly in 1916, when he was arrested for picking up a boy there and remained in custody for a week. Released finally on bail he fled the country, not to return until twenty-six years later; but to this little misadventure the world is indebted for — among other things — *Alone*: the author's favourite among his own books.

## In; out; in; out

By Robert Halsband

ANTONY BRETT-JAMES (Editor):  
Escape from the French  
Captain Hewson's Narrative  
192pp. Hodder and Stoughton/  
Webb and Bower. £8.95.  
0 340 26240

"Captain" Maurice Hewson called the narrative of his imprisonment and escape so "unvarnished tale of facts". His naval courtesy title is the only bit of varnish visible since the highest rank he attained was that of First Lieutenant. His factual tale, attractive for its genuine suspense and sincerity, must be viewed against the background of the Napoleonic wars, which began in 1793 and (interrupted by the Treaty of Amiens in 1802) dragged on until 1815, when Waterloo ended them for good.

As an Irish lad, Hewson had enlisted in 1796. Taken prisoner on shore near Brest in 1803 he was marched to the fortress prison of Verdun. In his narrative he recalls the "wanton severity" of his captors and their countrymen, when "we could not extort that smile, which more than half feeds the hungry." Five years later he and a fellow prisoner escaped and headed for the Mediterranean, but were recaptured near Montpellier. He was now sent to the formidable fortress at Bitche, not far from the Rhine. This time he waited only six weeks to escape, joined by Donat O'Brien and two other inmates. He and his companions headed east, crossed the Rhine and the Black Forest, skulked through Bavaria (dangerous as an ally of Napoleon), and reached Austria and freedom. His heroic and crafty odyssey ended at Trieste, where he rejoined the Royal Navy.

At his commander's suggestion he composed this narrative in the hope — a vain one — that he would be rewarded by the Admiralty with more than the lieutenantcy earned before his capture. Unpublished until now, Hewson's tale of adventurous escape makes a valuable addition to the literature of British

prisoners and fugitives during that era. By a neat coincidence his fellow prisoner O'Brien wrote his own much longer autobiographical account, and published it in 1914. Only the last quarter tells of his journey with Hewson; for before O'Brien calls "the Mission of Tears", he had already escaped and been recaptured twice. His account is more artful and circumstantial. For example, the herb soup served to prisoners is described as though for a recipe by Delia Smith or Julia Child.

Hewson's intimate narrative reflects his religious character and his British (not Irish) patriotism. He frequently thanks God for his good luck but not at Bitche, which he calls "the most miserable place on earth". He is on the threshold of his freedom, he remarks: "surely this must be old England was the first thought in our minds, but the guard of Soldiers around us turned us from our reverie." Many years later, when he contributed a sketch to a biographical dictionary, he called his flight "miraculous", and remembered that as a prisoner he had "undergone all the sufferings that 'brandy' could suggest and barbarity enforce." The actual details are vividly set down in his narrative.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) its brevity, the editor has embellished it with an inordinate number of large illustrations of all kinds, including portraits (except Hewson's, which presumably does not exist). In his introduction he sketches the Napoleonic background in clumsy fashion, and tells us more about the Hewson family and its genealogy than we need to know. He does not tell us what Hewson did between his leaving the navy in 1815 and his marriage in 1830. He fails to expand name abbreviations (Ino. Ches. Thes) or to explain the mention of 1842 (page 66) in a manuscript written in 1809. He also fails to explain how Hewson could have enlisted as Able Seaman when less than ten years old. In conclusion, a list, a brief, useful bibliography.

## Breakout from Butte

By Nesta Roberts

MARY MACLANE:  
The Story of Mary MacLane  
By Herself  
322pp. Cape. £6.50.  
0 224 01923 6

To be nineteen, to be aware of one's intellectual kinship with Lord Byron and Marie Bashkirtseff and to live in that "year of perfection and ugliness", Butte, Montana — is this the stuff of which tragedy of the more theatrical sort is made? When you are yourself nineteen, as was Mary MacLane when she wrote this, her first book, it is indeed. The public diary of a young woman who describes herself as "a creature the like of which you have never before happened upon" speaks for many other young persons, from Polpetto to Penge, or, more accurately, would have spoken for them up to about 1900, when young women stopped yearning and started participating. But one can well believe that when it was published, at the beginning of the century, it brought the author "an outstanding" notoriety, as well as "much good gold money." To be the Holden Caulfield of 1902 was no trifling thing.

The fact that much of Mary MacLane's self-portrait is predictable, coming from her conviction of her own genius, does not make the picture any less moving. The young girl who was "intellectually suffocated and ebbingly lonely in the polite society of Butte" comes off the page quivering with life. Her contempt for her dull, ineffective family, her admiration for a poem like King Lear's "The Sads of Des" ("This is the poet's perfect"), and her Nineteenth Invocation of the Devil,

The text of the second *Hanes Lecture*, *The History of Books*, as a field of study by G. Thomas L. Sells was published in the TLS on June 5. The first lecture, by Ruth Mortimer, "A Portrait of the Author in Sixteenth-Century France" has just appeared in pamphlet form and is available from Rare Book Collection, Wilson Library D24-A, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC27514, USA.

## Between warrior and devil

By Peter Holland

JULIE HANKEY (Editor):  
Richard III  
William Shakespeare  
266pp. Junction Books: Plays in Performance. £9.95.  
0 86245 011 X

Hazlitt was far from being completely won over when he first saw Edmund Kean play Hamlet. There were details of Kean's playing of the scene with Ophelia, in particular, that he could not condone. But, his review continued,

whatever nice faults might be found in this scene, they were amply redeemed by the manner of his coming back after he has gone to the extremity of the stage, from a pang of parting tenderness to press his lips to Ophelia's hand . . . It was the finest commentary that was ever made on Shakespeare. It explained the character at once (as he meant it) . . .

The passage is notorious or famous according to your taste: notorious if you hold that stage-business is necessarily grossly inferior to critical opinion; famous if you find, even in such an outrageously stagey gesture, something genuinely illuminating. Yet the passage is rarely treated as "commentary" at all. Kean's kiss is mentioned *ad hoc* in Furness's Variorum edition but extremely infrequently in other editions of the play. It is not as if there is any shortage of discussions of Hamlet's character as, in Hazlitt's words, "one of disappointed hope, of bitter regret, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him", but it rarely crosses most editors' minds to annotate their text in this way, let alone to allow Kean's action to make the point for them.

There is another side to the problem. Theatre historians are efficient at accumulating vast hoards of information about the way a particular part has been played between Burbage and Olivier, without usually being able to show how that information might be used to consider the role itself. Of course, stage histories have their own particular virtues in the documenting of taste, the definition of character, or the blurring of stage convention; but the play itself is buried under the pressure of the linear chronology of its performance history. There are fine individual examples of this sort of historical study (Rosenberg on *Othello* or Bartholomew on *Macbeth*) but only Rosenberg has tried to put the information to use in an account of the play scene by scene, speech by speech. The foolhardy attempt to include nearly everything has made his studies larger and larger, more and more likely to remain unread. 800 pages on *Macbeth* is both gargantuan and self-defeating, and he has still to tackle *Hamlet*.

Julie Hankey's edition of *Richard III* is a brilliant solution to both problems. It is the first of a series of "plays in performance". (A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Alchemist*, *Macbeth* and *Malin* are promised). There is a substantial introduction detailing the stage history chronologically, followed by a quarto of the play with extensive annotations of the who-did-what-how-and-why variety. Any glossing of the type that normally provides the staple diet of footnotes is relegated to a brief appendix. There are eight pages of play text, the so-called "text" of the quarto, which is the basis of the play as it has been seen (and heard) by performers. It is a volume that is both informative and immensely enjoyable. My copy is already covered with notes about production details from performances of the play I have seen that Ms Hankey has not revised text — such as a performance where I have been sorry to see her usually judicious choice of detail miss something I found significant. For anyone who

compares different performances with the obsession of the theatre addict or the more respectable aims of teacher or student, this edition is one of the most exciting books to have been published for a considerable time.

Not all the problems have been solved, however. I doubt if the edition will usually be read by people who have never read the play before — in fact, the occasionally unpolished editing and glossing would make that desirable. Obviously, the edition will be used for its notes rather than its text. To have the notes printed in traditional small-size type, for example, the traditional relationship of text to annotation that an edition like this effectively aims to reverse. Sometimes, Ms Hankey is unduly reticent about the sources of her information. The reader needs to be told more, particularly about unpublished material, including the nature and location of the various prompt-books consulted. She has obviously not consulted all of the 92 prompt-books listed in Shattuck's catalogue, but it would help to know which ones she has seen. Sometimes she seems to have passed over some useful source of information or analysis too rapidly; she could, for instance, have improved her study of the play between Cibber and Kean by better use of Donohue's brilliant study of *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age*. None of these is of really damaging importance.

The problem of the text itself does matter, though. The edition is based on the old Cambridge text, which is by now thoroughly out-of-date and frequently untrustworthy. Ms Hankey substitutes a considerable number of readings from the Folio text for the Q1 readings preferred by the Cambridge editors but never indicates (as indeed would be inappropriate given the purpose of her edition) where the changes have been made. The result is an edition that is awkwardly eclectic. It obviously matters far less for *Richard III* than it would for, say, *Leonor* or *Hamlet*, but it obscures any theatrical difference between the two texts. If Q1 is indeed a memorial reconstruction by some of the actors, as Ms Hankey seems to accept, or if it represents a version used on tour, as has also been proposed, then the changes to language, as well as

details of entrances and exits or other stage directions, are important for documenting the play's stage history. It would have been better to plump for one of the early texts throughout and annotate with the significant changes.

For the major problem is that the text in the theatre is not in the least stable. Ms Hankey is good at marking out in the playing texts and some of the local variations (though the cuts could have been usefully tabulated). But in 1700 Colley Cibber adapted the play extensively and his version became, substantially, the only version of the play used in performance until at least 1821, when Macready attempted unsuccessfully to restore Shakespeare's text. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the use of the original text became the norm and bits of Cibber's version still turn up as late as Olivier's film version of the play in 1955 (Incidentally Ms Hankey has disappointingly little to say about this or any of the other Shakespearean versions).

Cibber began his play with a sizable part of 3 *Henry VI* and interspersed the play proper with a few other borrowings from elsewhere in Shakespeare as well as numerous speeches of his own. In all the version runs to about 2,000 lines (Shakespeare's is over 3,500) and still has place for seven new soliloquies. But Ms Hankey gives the reader no chance to sample the main body of Cibber's text and in particular to see the curious scrupulousness on Cibber's part in distinguishing between speeches entirely Shakespeare's (printed in

*Richard III* is primarily a one-man play. Occasionally Margaret has managed to make some sort of impact, once or twice Buckingham has succeeded in being noticed. But Richard dominates the stage, particularly in Cibber's version where he has 40 per cent of the lines. Julie Hankey's introduction elegantly charts the oscillations in the way Richard has been presented between the apparent polarities of noble warrior and outright devil. Garrick allowed the image of Richard as the

soldier of the last act to diminish, encouraging the audience to sympathize in a way that was fascinatingly new. Kemble emphasized the part's royalty and inner nobility (though I'm not sure how he managed to find any) because that was how he played any king. His approach had to contend with the sheer power of villainy in the performance of George Frederick Cooke, and the very different power of the evil imagination in Kean. Recently Richard has seemed increasingly psychotic, as in Ian Holm's performance in 1963, or a cross between a clown and an exceedingly dangerous animal (Olivier's spider or Clikvadze's toad).

Again and again the argument that Ms Hankey naps out in defining the different versions in her introduction is beautifully sustained and enhanced in the detailed annotation of the text itself. In the final battle, for instance, Ian Holm wandered round the stage in huge and heavy armour, clutching an enormous sword as tall as himself, while the lightly-armoured Richmond dived round him. From within Richard's helmet came strange moans, mad and frightening with no glimmer of the heroics of other warriors. When Richmond stabbed Richard through the visor (a detail Ms Hankey omits) the audience was both horrified at the killing and relieved that the threat Richard posed was finally destroyed and stamped out. Olivier's death-throes were lengthy and convulsive. Chikvadze fought his Richmond through holes in a map of England. Kean's Richard was a long time dying: when he had dropped his sword, he fought on with his fists, finally gnashing his teeth at Richmond as he had his last words and then blinked and rolled onto his back to die. Hazlitt saw all this as the struggle of "some helpless infant", just as *The Times* described Ian Holm as "erecting to himself like a baby" 150 years later. Was this pantomime of Kean's really capable of being praised by Leigh Hunt for "the beauty and fidelity of his dying scenes"?

Reading stage histories is usually a frustrating occupation. The book fails either to tell you enough about any one performance or enough about the play. Reading Ms Hankey's edition is a thoroughly rewarding experience. I look forward eagerly to the subsequent volumes in the series.

And to reduce them from three to two. She admits that the changes "make a certain amount of sense, though one cannot be at all sure that the sense is that of Shakespeare". But at least it is that of a man of the theatre, whereas to general she sees in the scribe "a total lack of dramatic sense".

Discussion of the practical problems faced by the Folio composers provides a fascinating application of Charles Haiman's discoveries about the casting-off of copy. The author convincingly demonstrates that a number of omissions were probably occasioned by the need to save space. Nor is her theory that a compositor also added words when he needed to stretch his copy inherently improbable. But an editor would have to be completely persuaded of the basic hypothesis before attributing such additions and omissions to the compositor. In the absence of such certainty, eclecticism is the only possible course.

Similarly with alterations supposedly made by the scribe. Many changes are undoubtedly there. But the author's admission that there are "three improvements that cannot be readily attributed to the scribe" damages her case. For one of them, she has to allow the possibility that the scribe suddenly had a stroke of genius: "a change not among these three, the addition of the phrase 'The victor's sweetest' (4.5.75), also postulates a scribe whose time might

have been more creatively employed; and another alteration, from the quarto's 'I have them ready' to the Folio's 'I have them ready' (in the King's speech on sleep, 3.1.26-7), to the Folio's 'give thy repose' / 'To the wet sea-boy', which she regards as an "unsatisfying correction", seems to me, if not a restoration, then a master-stroke of invention.

The likelihood that the scribe had access to an authoritatively revised manuscript is not diminished by his failure to correct all the quarto's errors. J. K. Walton (in a book not cited here) has shown that consultation of alternative versions in the preparation of quarto texts for the Folio was generally no better than sporadic, and though it is not argued that the transcript of 2 *Henry IV* was undertaken specifically for the Folio, the scribe's situation appears to have been similar.

Professor Prosser's lucid study represents in its details a real advance to understanding of the text of 2 *Henry IV* (which it is sad to learn that, after all this effort, she does not consider "a good play in its own right"). Had she proved her case beyond doubt, the difficulty and the responsibility of the editors' task would have been reduced. Her work may well increase distrust of the Folio version, but this is likely to remain one of the place where editorial taste is of paramount importance, and which demonstrate that in Shakespeare editing the concept of definiteness is a mirage.



## Between quarto and Folio

By Stanley Wells

KELEOR PROSSER:  
Shakespeare's Anonymous Editors  
Scribe and Compositor in the Folio  
Text of "2 Henry IV"  
219pp. Stanford University Press.  
\$18.50.  
0 8047 1033 3

Justification for a whole book on the text of 2 *Henry IV* can be found in Fredson Bowers's statement, "Of all Shakespearean texts this, together with *Othello*, seems to provide the most difficult problem about the nature of the printers' copy for the Folio". The play had appeared in a quarto, deriving from Shakespeare's old papers, in 1600. This edition exists in two states, one of them rectifying the omission of a scene (3.1). The Folio adds eight substantial passages generally agreed to have been made by the scribe or the Folio compositor. Scribal freedom with stage directions is evident elsewhere in the Folio in the work of Ralph Crane, and can certainly obliterate authorial intention. Professor Prosser's study demonstrates that the Folio directions in 2 *Henry IV* should be treated with great suspicion, but she does not convince me that in the last scene the scribe would have had reason to exceed his brief as far as to give the designation "Groom" to the quarto's "stewards of robes".

quarto and, for the added passages, the manuscript from which it had been printed.

The question is important because of the lesser variants. It has usually been supposed that some of them are corrections, or represent revisions, made perhaps during rehearsals, and so should be accepted. Professor Prosser does not concur. She states her conclusion, and summarizes her argument, in an introductory chapter. "Analysis of stage directions and speech prefixes" of the problems faced by the Folio composers and their solutions, and of the given scribe's distinctive cast of mind and working habits — all suggest that except for the eight major additions and the first scene of act three, no source beyond Q<sub>1</sub> — the first issue of the quarto — was required to prepare the transcript serving as the Folio's copy.

So she sets out to prove that all the Folio's changes other than the stated additions are likely to have been made by the scribe or the Folio compositor. Scribal freedom with stage directions is evident elsewhere in the Folio in the work of Ralph Crane, and can certainly obliterate authorial intention. Professor Prosser's study demonstrates that the Folio directions in 2 *Henry IV* should be treated with great suspicion, but she does not convince me that in the last scene the scribe would have had reason to exceed his brief as far as to give the designation "Groom" to the quarto's "stewards of robes".

## Boosting the bluestockings

By Gillian Sutherland

JOAN N. BURSTYN:  
Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood  
185pp. Croom Helm. £11.95.  
0 7099 0330 9

Joan Burstyn's intention is first to delineate the Victorian "Ideal of Womanhood", then to show how the movement for the higher education of women challenged this, and finally to show how the defence of the ideal affected the forms and institutions of higher education as they actually developed. To see the movement for the higher education of women in the nineteenth century primarily in these terms is to ask questions of more interest to the feminist in the twentieth century than to the historian of the nineteenth century and Professor Burstyn acknowledges this in her very first paragraphs. But she also gives her study a specific historical context and it must at least in part be judged by historians' criteria. Sloppy history is hardly likely to make effective contemporary social criticism.

Cardinal Newman lamented that the Englishman gets his opinions "by and by" from the nursery, some at school, some from the world, and has a zeal for them, because they are his own. Other men, at least, exercise a judgment upon them and prove them by a rule. He does not care to do so, but he takes them as he finds them, whether they fit together or not; and makes light of the incongruity, and thinks it a proof of common-sense, good sense, strong, shrewd sense, to do so.

It seems unlikely that these irritating habits are confined to one sex, or, indeed, to one nationality; and the comments may serve as a text for the historian of ideas and attitudes. Individuals' belief-systems are all too seldom internally consistent, balanced constructs. Often they are explicable more easily in terms of biography than anything else. *People* have opinions; ideas and ideals.

Unfortunately these notions are

rather lost sight of in Professor Burstyn's book. Her footnotes (at the end of each chapter) and her bibliography contain much that is of interest, particularly in the coverage of the contemporary periodical literature. But far too little of this goes through to the text, except in the chapter on doctors' attitudes, much of which has already been published in article form. With this exception, her descriptions both of Victorian education and of the "Ideal of Womanhood" are constructs unanchored by time, place or authorship.

Clergyman, for example, get much less sharply focused and precise attention than doctors. She writes, "some clergymen supported the foundation of women's colleges in Oxford and Cambridge", although "most clergymen took a contrary view. This hardly does justice to a complex situation. Those working on women's higher education — in London from the end of the 1840s as well as in Oxford and Cambridge from the 1870s — have early to come to terms with the Unitarians as benefactors and nationalists out of all proportion to their numbers, and with the presence of daughters of Anglican clergymen in significant numbers among the early students. It is increasingly clear that Unitarian attitudes to women were more liberal than those of most other denominations; and the daughters of vicars and rectors provide important clues to the role of Anglican clergymen in the formation of a liberal intelligentsia in England in the 1860s and 1870s. Professor Burstyn, however, goes on to argue that clerical opposition to the higher education of women was rooted in a rather special kind of vested interest: since women could not be ordained, their admission to universities would eventually challenge clerical domination. She offers no documentation of this, remarking only that "the threat women posed to clerical power was rarely mentioned in public".

This simply will not do. If the historian cannot identify specific people saying specific things, adopting particular positions, at particular points in time, then there is a central, possibly insurmountable problem of evidence. Sometimes something can be done by a delicate structure of inference. But its partial and tentative

nature must always be stressed. Unfortunately, this is not Professor Burstyn's style. Early on she writes, "There was also a fear that the marriages of educated women would prove unstable. . . . Then 'sometimes these fears were discussed openly; more often women were praised for whatever it was in keeping with the ideal of womanhood' that dissuaded them from wanting to participate in the affairs of this world." She later remarks, "Although the general literature did not often raise issues of economic theory, authors expected that the assumptions discussed below were shared by their readers." With great relief, we encounter a real person, Elizabeth Barrett, writing to Robert Browning in 1845, "There is a natural inferiority of mind in women . . . . But Professor Burstyn has to add, "Few people in the first decades of the nineteenth century challenged this analysis" and we are soon back in a world where the principal actors are abstract nouns roaming freely back and forth through the decades. The title of Chapter Seven — "The Ideal confronts Reality" — says it all.

Nineteenth-century views on the education of women were many and varied. Beside Elizabeth Barrett we might set Sydney Smith, in 1810, "Taking it, then, for granted that nature has been as bountifully endued with one sex as to the other . . . or George Eliot in 1856, "A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, is all the simpler and the less objective for the knowledge". We might make something, too, of the claim made in 1917 by the staunch opponent of women's suffrage, Mrs Humphry Ward, that in the last half century there had been an "astounding rise in the intellectual standards of women". Of course there are patterns, groupings and configurations; but they are a great deal more subtle than the kaleidoscope than Professor Burstyn would have us believe.

*The Chatterton Review* will be publishing a special Eric Gill number in 1981. Articles and other material suitable for publication should be sent to: Eric Gill, c/o Editor, 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, Sask. Canada: S7N 0W6.

مكتبة الأصل



## Probing the *paliotto*

By John Beckwith

ROBERT P. BERGMAN:  
The Salerno Ivaries  
Ars Sacra from Medieval Amalfi  
268pp. Harvard University Press.  
£22.50.  
0 674 78528 2

Amalfi, so superbly situated on the slopes of the Lattari Mountains rising from the Gulf of Salerno, although mentioned in a letter of Pope Gregory I in 590, did not reach its hey-day until the tenth century. By this time it had freed itself from the Duchy of Naples and from the dominion of the Lombards, but wisely it always acknowledged a kind of suzerainty under the Byzantine emperors. From the ninth to the eleventh century Amalfitan political leaders and members of the nobility often received titles or honours conferred by the emperor and maintained their establishment in Constantinople. Pentimone, son of Maurus of Amalfi, had a large house there; two monastic foundations served the needs of the large merchant community in the city. Commerce was the dominant factor. Amalfi was to become, along with Venice, the leading Italian merchant republic of its day, with fleets courting over the Mediterranean and warehouses in all the important Near Eastern towns - Antioch, Jerusalem, Acre and Old Cairo (Fustat). Amalfitan colonies existed in northern Africa, Sicily and, nearer home, Salerno, Apulia and surely Rome. The connection with the Abbey of Monte Cassino was held very firm but also the connection with Islam. In short, the Amalfitani were to be found everywhere - as William of Apulia described them, "bearing away their merchandise to

sell/And loving to carry back the wares they have bought". Thus the members of the family of Maurus commissioned bronze doors in Constantinople which were given to the Cathedral at Amalfi, to Monte Cassino, to San Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome and to the sanctuary of San Michele at Monte Sant'Angela in Apulia.

With the coming of the Normans the Amalfitani had to think again and they literally handed themselves over to Robert Guiscard for protection against their old enemies, the Sicilianitani. In fact, under the Normans the two hostile cities became confederates but the Amalfitani were not content with Norman rule, frequently rebelled and were finally subdued by King Roger II in 1131. Four years later the Pisans attacked the city and repeated their vicious attack in 1137. The destruction was considerable. Thus passed the glory of Amalfi.

In his excellent study of a group of ivory carvings in the Cathedral of Salerno, usually known as the *paliotto*, Robert P. Bergman examines the iconography of the Old and New Testament scenes to be found on the panels, analyses their style with great perspicuity, and offers the view that the *paliotto* was originally a pair of doors set up in the chapel screen in the cathedral about the time of its consecration in 1084 during the episcopate of Alfanus I (1058-1085). Alfanus had composed the *liudi* which accompanied the frescoes depicting the Old and New Testament scenes in the atrium of the basilica at Monte Cassino. But, of course, the iconography and the style of the ivory carvings are complex and reflect many different traditions. In his attempt to unravel these traditions Professor Bergman ranges widely, from the sixth-century Cotton Genesis in the British Museum, now, as the result of a fire in the eighteenth

century, reduced to a few charred fragments, some tenth-century Byzantine Catechisms, some eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and a great many other artefacts, frescoes, ivory carvings, bronze doors and so on.

Bergman was a pupil of Kurt Weitzmann at Princeton and his book is very much a product of the tuition he received there. Weitzmann's "cyclic" approach to the transmission of narrative illustration, his establishment of recensions or "families" of cycles, often based on lost prototypes, arouses some misgivings. One scholar once wrote that late antique manuscripts appeared to have been produced at Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Constantinople and Princeton. In the long run Bergman's conclusions on the Salerno ivory carvings appear to be sound. There is, however, another snag. No one denies that the carvings appear to be based in part on a group called "Grado" at one time thought to be part of a chair sent to Grado from Alexandria by the Emperor Heraclius in the early seventh century. No one today, as far as this reviewer is aware, accepts this tradition. But a few years ago Weitzmann wrote a most lauded article arguing that these "Grado" panels were produced in a Syro-Palestinian workshop in the late seventh or eighth century. The theory is disturbing. It seems to me that the panels are more likely to have been produced in southern Italy, probably in Amalfi, in the tenth century but it would take another article to demonstrate what Bergman's conclusion that the Salerno panels were produced at Amalfi seems entirely cogent.

The book concludes with a catalogue of the panels and related Amalfitan ivory carvings and a sequence of good illustrations. It will clearly remain a standard work for many years to come.



George Bellows (1882-1925) wanted to be a professional baseball player, but became an artist who produced a series of lithographs protesting against German atrocities in Belgium during the First World War and whose most famous paintings are of boxing matches. This lithographic self-portrait (1921) by Bellows is taken from an issue of The Princeton University Library Chronicle (Volume XLII, Number 2, Winter 1981, 33.) devoted to an exhibition of graphic arts in America, 1670-1900 that was recently held at the library. The issue includes articles on American graphic arts by Dale Roylance and nineteenth-century American printmakers by Nancy Finlay and a checklist of the exhibition.

## Sustaining principles

By J.M. Richards

MARIO SALVADORI:  
Why Buildings Stand Up  
The Strength of Architecture  
311pp. W.W. Norton. £8.75.  
0 393 01401 0

How refreshing to be faced with a book whose title unmistakably defines what it is about. The first sentence of the author's preface reads: "This book was written for those who love beautiful buildings and wonder how they stand up." Ugly buildings, of course, stand up for just the same reasons, but that does not lessen the value of a clear explanation, in layman's language, of the engineering principles that lie behind, and contribute to the shaping of, different types of building, ancient and modern.

That is what Mario Salvadori, an eminent American civil engineer, has provided. Only one chapter strays somewhat outside his declared purposes, the Second, devoted to the pyramids of Egypt. We do not need to be told why pyramids stand up; they can hardly do anything else. In fact if any stone or brick building collapses totally, a pyramid is what it becomes. That chapter is devoted instead, quite interestingly if not so relevantly, to the procedures that were involved in building the pyramids and the special purposes they served.

The treatment is not evolutionary. There are chapters dealing each with a single famous building, chosen to illustrate a particular constructional principle and concluding with a brief survey of other developments of the same kind. Beaulieu Cathedral, for example, represents the dynamism of Gothic construction with its counterbalancing stresses of vault and pier and buttress. Hagia Sophia represents the spatial triumphs of domed construction; Brooklyn Bridge represents the principle of cable suspension. There is an admirable chapter on the Eiffel Tower. Between these are chapters describing the structural nature of various building types such as the skyscraper, and others explaining about reinforced concrete and about the still newer pneumatic structures.

A lot of attention is paid to recent specialized developments in concrete

like folded plate and hanging dish roofs and shell dams, which clearly mean much to the author; "exciting" is a perhaps unhelpful epithet. Here there is a perhaps natural - bias towards American examples. As a consequence some of the pioneers of concrete technique - Robert Maillart in Switzerland, Tarras in Spain, Candela in Mexico - get very little mention.

Professor Salvadori's explanations of building and engineering methods are satisfactorily clear and assume no prior technical knowledge on the reader's part, one wishes that when he is trying to evoke a picture of the resulting architecture his writing did not become instead verbose and fulsome. Here is a simple passage from his chapter on Hagia Sophia:

"The message created by Anthemius for his Emperor, his patriarch, and his people rung loud and clear. This space, a symbol of the protective love of the Church and Empire, is covered by curved surfaces, which embrace and protect the people humbly assembled to pray for the protection of the great King of the Jews, Ood-meda-man for their salvation. But the magnificent interior does also signify the greatness of the state and gives assurance of its strength and magnanimity. The light supporting the dome made it into a 'dome of heaven' and elevated the spirit to celestial thoughts; the also served to flood down the domes reminding worshippers of the rebirth of the Emperor's palace. Meanwhile the church orientation pointed to the rising sun and to the hopes of the world, and the altar under the eastern half-dome roofing the apse lay in its semi-darkness to increase the mystery of the mass. Seldom have two such contrasting messages as those broadcast by Hagia Sophia been incorporated in a single harmonious and mesmerizing architectural ambience."

There is more in this vein, no doubt the product of the author's genuine enthusiasm yet the whole of the book is a masterpiece of the great "Romantic" purpose of the book, to demand a more practical use of language. Fortunately the numerous line-illustrations, which play a vital part, are a model of clarity. They are the work of Sarahella Hooker and Christopher Raggs and are skillfully amplified and delicately drawn.

## The was which is

By C. W. E. Bigsby

LEE JENKINS:  
Faulkner and Black-White Relations  
A Psychoanalytic Approach  
301pp. Columbia University Press \$26.  
0 231 04744 4

RONNIE J. BARTHOLO:  
Black Time  
Fiction of Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States  
209pp. Yale University Press. £11.  
0 300 02573 4

William Faulkner once observed that "time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people. There is no such thing as was - only is. If was existed there would be no grief and sorrow." He might have said the same of a group of people or a race. For, paradoxically, the black American and the southerner are united not only by the power and authority which they are prepared to concede to the past but by their conviction that the past is not simply a force giving shape to experience or providing a clue to present action: it is itself a present fact.

Black and southerner unite in feeling themselves the victims of history, in same sense disclosed from time, speculators of their own threatened inconsequence. The battle which they separately wage is to claim a right of access to the present through reclaiming and hence transforming an ambiguous past.

The black writer's ambivalence with regard to history is understandable. It has to be re-invented before it can be claimed; it has to be granted the retrospective grace of heroic resistance and denial before it can be integrated into a myth of personal and social emancipation. So, too, for the southern writer. The past contains so much which will not bear inspection that it is least as legend, reconstructed as an elaborate myth.

One of the strengths of Lee Jenkins's *Faulkner and Black-White Relations* is that it identifies this ethical truth and discusses with genuine insight the conflicts which generated Faulkner's attitude to his black characters. Jenkins attacks Faulkner for what he sees as his misrepresentations of the Negro. He indicts his "racism", his "tendency to heighten reality to the level of the symbolic and mythic, and to distort the reality of black life for his own aesthetic ends". In support he invokes both the novels and Faulkner's interviews. The charge is a crude one, requiring more than the rhetorical indictments which rather too many articles in the past decade or so have substituted for close analysis. For the most part, Professor Jenkins provides that analysis.

He is plainly correct in insisting on the reductionism implied in Faulkner's observation that "the will of man to prevail will even take the ether channel of the black man, black race, before it will relinquish, succumb, be divided into 'organism' and 'egological'". He suggests, then, all George Eliot's novels can be seen as dramatizing a conflict between those elements.

## I against we

By John Batchelor

K. M. NEWTON:  
George Eliot: Romantic Humanist  
A Study of the Philosophical Structure of Her Novels  
215pp. Macmillan. £12.  
0 353 28101 2

Speaking of George Eliot, John Bayley remarks in *The Romantic Survival* that the novelists, rather than the poets, of the nineteenth century "are the real beneficiaries of the great 'Romantic' movement". And it is widely agreed that the memory of the Romantic poets has fed the characterizations of Maggie Tulliver and Will Ladislaw. K. M. Newton's book is a systematic inquiry into the possibility that George Eliot is an heir of the Romantic movement in most aspects of her work. If the impulses of the Romantics can be

least", As Jenkins rightly indicates, Faulkner's work the implied result is both softened and intensified by a sentimentalism compounded of guilt and compassion which is never sufficiently remote from contempt. For it is less a case of the will of man to prevail even taking the ether channel of the black race, than of it especially taking this channel. And this, in turn, is less an expression of irony than of a kind of blundering, even well-meaning, insensitivity.

Thus, Faulkner projects Dilsey, in *The Sound and the Fury*, into an indefinite future which in no way differs from the past; she is presented as nothing more than a passive resource of understanding to be unlocked by white desperation. It is as though Faulkner never really learnt the lesson he seems to be offering in *Light in August*. The Negro endures precisely because he is kept out of time and hence remains immune to its ironies. But as a consequence, of course, he is also denied access to his victories. As Faulkner himself observed in his Nobel Prize address, endurance alone is not enough: man must prevail. And that victory can only be won within time. If *Go Down Moses* and *Intruder in the Dust* are evidence that he did come to appreciate the existence of a density and an active dimension to black life which he had earlier been inclined to dismiss or ignore, they never quite redeemed his earlier portraits. He could never entirely liberate the blacks from his own myths in which he presumed they and he were mutually entrapped.

For Bonnie J. Barthold, in *Black Time: Fiction of Africa, the Caribbean and the United States*, the black disposition from time is not simply a product of American experience. It unites, in particular, fiction writers of Africa and America. She quotes Cheikh Achebe's observation that the blacks must rebuild "the foundations of the past" without retreating from the present. And this is, indeed, the special task which so many black writers have assumed. Just how sophisticated this engagement with a past needs to be, which must not be sentimentalized if it is to have strength of both an enabling myth and a cultural weapon, is made apparent in this intelligent and considered account.

The marks of the disorientation, from which the book grew, remain, in the intensity with which the thesis is pressed. But, for the most part, it offers a narrative account of black writing which describes the way in which historical disruptions are assumed in a developing myth of continuity without itself relapsing into a mere celebration of persistence or a portrait of unquestioned commonality. The disjunction between personal and public time, between a self located on centre stage, and a society which dislodges that self from the stage altogether, is potentially the source of a tragic or ironic experience. But Professor Barthold sees it equally as a source of energy and as evidence of a concern with the problems of time, definitive of black writing. She argues that it has been productive of a subtle and distinctive literature.

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